HITLER AND THE CHRISTIANS

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HITLER AND THE CHRISTIANS

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THE CHRISTIAN CREEDS AND THE GERMAN NATION

No other people has been so deeply and lastingly affected by the religious cleavage that took place in Western Europe in the sixteenth century as the German—the people among whom it took its rise.

The basic reason for this is not so much the fact that of the German-speaking population of to-day precisely half is Protestant while the majority of the remainder (for the most part inhabiting the periphery of the German-speaking area) is Catholic. The external religious features of all other civilized peoples are determined by the denomination of the majority (*e.g.*, the Latin nations by the Catholic, the Scandinavian by the Lutheran, the Dutch by the Calvinist), but no people is so divided by religion as the German. No, the determining factor is not so much the present-day cleavage of the German people into two opposing halves as its peculiar historical development. The effect of it has been that each of the two Christian denominations—viewing the situation from different angles at different periods—has stigmatized the other as " anti-Reich " and as " imposed upon its adherents

by the powers that be ", whereas it itself has been able, or has even been forced, psychologically speaking, to regard itself as indissolubly wedded to the true, genuine German mission.

The Catholic, proud of the traditions of the Holy Roman Empire, could not forget that the Protestant princes—such as Maurice of Saxony, in the sixteenth century, Bernard of Weimar, in the seventeenth, and even Frederick the Great, in the eighteenth—had taken up arms against the Emperor and had formed alliances with France and occasionally with Sweden. In spite of his rejoicing at the unification of Germany that had been gained after the victory over France, it was not easy for the Catholic to forget that Bismarck, who had raised the Protestant House of Hohenzollern to imperial power, had definitively dispelled the pan-German dream of a Reich that included Catholic Austria. The Protestant, all in favour of the new, pure German Reich, accused the Catholic of harbouring Latin, " ultramontane ", sympathies harking back to the " Counter-Reformation ", with its Spanish troops and emissaries planted on German soil, and in the nineteenth century he regarded the *entente* between the Catholic Centre and the Poles, Alsatians, and other " particularist and separatist " bodies within the German frontier as a sign of national unreliability.

This difference of outlook between the two parties, which was bound to lead to a tragic dismemberment, or at least disunion, in the German national consciousness, was most sharply defined in their respec-

tive attitudes towards the Reformation. The Protestant fastened on to the fact that by the year 1570 two-thirds of the German people, if not more, had cast off the bondage of Rome and that it was not till then that a considerable proportion had been won back by the Counter-Reformation—under compulsion from the civil authorities, he believed. Similarly the Catholic held on to his version : that the " Reformation " was in its religio-political essence a revolution of the nobility ; the will of the people was respected only so long as it was of use to these exalted opportunists and agitators. The Peasants' War, with its appalling cruelties, was a proof of this.

In times of hostility especially, only the crimes of either side were remembered ; not a thought was given to the fact that in those fearful 130 years that elapsed between Luther's nailing of his theses to the doors of the church at Wittenberg (in 1517) and the end of the Thirty Years' War (in 1648), adherents of both creeds in German countries were, to the best of their knowledge and belief, suffering on behalf of Jesus Christ. Men shut their eyes to the fact that these sufferings were ordered by the secular authorities of every denomination, not excluding the Lutheran, whose suppression of " crypto-Calvinism", culminating in the execution of the Saxon Chancellor Nicholas Krell, on October 19th, 1601, is far less frequently mentioned than the death of Servetus in Calvinist Geneva or the first burning of a Lutheran in Catholic Louvain.

In every quarter it was far too easily overlooked

that *all* were guilty and that all had had to pay the penalty by the shedding of their blood. Further, the blame for the various alliances with non-German powers was attributed to the denominations themselves instead of to individual political schemers, and they were invariably judged by inappropriate standards. Consequently the confessions denounced each other not only on dogmatic, but also, as it were, on historical grounds. Each ascribed the existence of the other to " foul play ". None was prepared to credit the other with good faith, either collectively or in the person of its leaders, leaving aside the misdeeds of individuals, and consequently to grant it full civic toleration. The Catholics complained that the Protestants had attacked the Empire, and they looked on the Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus as the representative of their religious opponents, while to the Protestants the Catholic Church appeared as something radically un-German and essentially opposed to true piety.

The form in which the idea of toleration gained a footing in Germany, not merely as a philosophical *Weltanschauung* [1] but as a political reality, was the governmental system of the House of Hohenzollern, which in itself was intolerant. One of the first clerics whom it was to drive out of office was the famous Lutheran hymn-writer Paul Gerhardt, who had to vacate his pulpit in Berlin, in 1666, because he could not conscientiously comply with the order of the Great Elector to refrain from " pulpit

[1] This much-used word has the sense of " world theory " or " world outlook ".

polemics ", in other words to keep silent about the dogmatic distinctions between his, the Lutheran, faith and the Calvinistic, to which the Hohenzollerns had seceded in 1613. If we except those who fought against the " Augsburg Interim ", which was soon disposed of (1548–1552), Gerhardt and his companions in distress were the first direct forerunners of the modern *Notbundpfarrer* (Emergency League Pastors). For in Prussia then, as now throughout the whole of Germany, the Church had to struggle to protect its sovereign rights against State interference, which took place in the name of civic toleration—nowadays known as " national unity ". The real purpose, however, was to replace the established religions (beginning with the two Protestant ones), which were differentiated solely by their interpretation of Christ's teaching, by one determined by the head of the State.

This is shown by the " Prussian Union " brought about by King Frederick William III in 1817, on the occasion of the tercentenary celebration of the nailing up of Luther's theses. This was preceded by the abolition by the hypocritical " Soldier King " (Frederick William I) of almost all the ceremonies that Lutheranism had retained from Catholic ritual, whereby many ecclesiastics were deprived of their office (1738). The " Union " meted out to Lutheranism and Calvinism precisely the same treatment that the supporters of the " National Church " would now apply to *all* denominations : each of the two religions might " retain its creed " but must form *one* Church in conjunction with the

other, although according to its own belief the doctrine of the other was heretical. Naturally, this was possible only when the old creed was no longer taken seriously and its distinctive doctrines were attributed to the "fruitless bickering of theologians", and above all when real unanimity was felt in something else, compared with which the disruptive old beliefs sank into insignificance.

The unifying force was the *Weltanschauung* of "German idealism", which had developed out of pietism, with its indifference to dogma, in many cases (for example, Schleiermacher) almost unconsciously, in others (notably Hegel) out of sheer revulsion from it. This idealism professed to be the true form of Christianity, and as an "esoteric religion of cultivated people" it regarded the denominations as second-rate receptacles or shells—externalities being valueless in comparison with pious "feeling"—or as the first stages of their own doctrine, Catholicism being the most primitive of all. To oppose these first stages seemed to the idealist as superfluous or as harmful as cutting open the cocoon of a butterfly so as to shorten the pupa stage. Why remove prematurely what would come away of its own accord directly it ceases to be a protection and becomes a hindrance? Frequently, indeed, the existence of "independent churches" was welcomed as, to quote Hegel, it was precisely in contrast to them that the State could bring into existence "universality of thought" as "self-acknowledged rationality and morality".[1]

[1] *The Philosophy of Right* (§ 270).

Drastic action was necessary only when those who had stayed out of the scheme " overstepped their rights ", as in the case of the Lutheran community at Hönigern in Silesia, which refused to hold " united " services in its church until it was compelled to do so by the display of military force (1834). The same treatment was applied to the Catholic Church, which in Prussia, as elsewhere, refused to allow any exceptions to be made to her laws regarding mixed marriages and would not give way even when the Archbishop of Cologne was taken into custody (1837). This latter incident demonstrated the truth of the saying : " God be praised, they are using force ! ", meaning that persecution, no matter how brutal it might be, so long as it was open, was far less dangerous to the Church than that underhand whittling away, that almost indifferent disregard, of her principles which even then was the method preferred by the representatives of the *Zeitgeist.*

It was this especially that caused the gravest anxiety to " educated " Catholics, for as a general rule they were faced, not with open persecution, but with an absolutely self-assured, apparently " supreme " contempt for their creed, or with its barefaced employment as " an opium for the people ", as a social soporific in accordance with the dictum " religion must be preserved for the sake of the people ". This was the dictum Hegel adopted in an addendum to the already mentioned § 270 : " the best means of obtaining a respectful attitude towards the State is a philosophical examination of

it; failing this it may be obtained by way of religious feeling". And was not that which in the opinion of many was the best part of that religious feeling—the mystical ecstasy of a pious disposition—"taken good care of" in idealism? Surely every honest scholar had freely to acknowledge that the critical theology of neo-Protestantism that had grown up side by side with idealistic philosophy was superior to what was known, or rather despised, as "Scholasticism" and to the old-fashioned orthodoxy? And how was it that he was faced with such an acknowledgement? Simply because he forgot that the real scholasticism had other problems to deal with than this new historical science, whose ultimate purpose was to show by philological or philosophical criticism of every inconvenient form of ecclesiastical tradition that this "esoteric religion of cultivated people" was the "essence of Christianity", when it did not dare to draw the radical conclusions of enlightened humanitarianism.

Thus it was that even Catholic theologians, such as Hermes and Döllinger, and, subsequently, the "Reform Catholics" [1] and Modernists, became the involuntary and, in some cases, unconscious champions of the "Third Creed" within the Catholic Church in Germany. But the Church's resistance to this, as to every form of State interference, reopened the intellectual fissure, or rather

[1] One of the leaders of *Reformkatholizismus* was Hermann Schell (1850–1906), a Catholic theologian who came into conflict with the Holy See in 1898. The movement was condemned by Pius X as being a form of Modernism.

abyss, between the two denominations, which, partly as a result of the enlightened belief in *one* criterion of morals and rationality, but principally on account of the emotional well-being induced by pietism, had seemed almost to have closed by about 1800, when the Protestant Novalis wrote his *Europe or Christendom*, and Sailer, afterwards a Catholic bishop, was giving manifold expression to an "evangelical" piety that stopped short, so to speak, of the religious cleavage and could not have been objected to by any Protestant of his time.

But even before this the conversions of Protestant writers and artists that had taken place in the first decade of the nineteenth century had irritated their former co-religionists. An educated Catholic might be excused the reverent preservation of traditional usage but for anyone else to "relapse" into a stage of development that had already been overcome was unforgivable. Still more irritating were the Church's obvious intention to keep "Science" at the same undeveloped stage, and the public enforcement of her will on her own adherents, whereas Vilmar's and Löhe's neo-Lutheranism and Kohlbrügge's strict Calvinism, which attempted, more or less ineffectually, the same procedure in the Protestant camp, ceased to command respect. Most annoying of all, however, was the refusal of the Catholic Church to have anything to do with the movements purporting to free her from her Roman elements and to incorporate her into the German life, the nationalist world, of the nineteenth century. The more "enlightened" than national "German Catho-

licism "[1] anterior to 1848, on which such high hopes had been placed, failed as dismally as "Old Catholicism", which at the time of the *Kulturkampf* rebelled against "Ultramontanism" and its "unhistorical, false" claims to infallibility, after Wessenberg's project of a State Church,[2] at the beginning of the nineteenth century, had been a matter of only personal interest, and Febronianism, in the eighteenth century, had failed to develop beyond a mere episode.

Gradually, therefore, when it was realized that the Papacy was not, after all, nearing the end of its career as a factor of historical importance, as Ranke had imagined it was as recently as 1834, "Rome" became the really serious "obstacle to German unity". It was looked on as the enemy of modern philosophy and science, of the modern State, of the modern nation—in fact, of modern society and the new Germany in general. The denominational cleavage was reopened, but it no longer took the form, as in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, of a dispute as to the true interpretation of the doctrine taught by Christ and the correct constitution of His Church. This cleavage was a politico-cultural one. The question was whether German

[1] The *Deutschkatholiken*, a combination of two parties led by Johannes Czerski and Johann Ronge, aimed at reforming the Catholic Church; they broke away from the Church in 1844 and redivided into two parties in 1848.

[2] Baron von Wessenberg (1774-1860), Catholic theologian, Vicar General in the diocese of Constance in 1801, attempted to form a "German Catholic National Church", whereupon the Pope declined to confirm his election to the offices of Coadjutor (1814) and Diocesan Administrator (1817).

culture and civic life were to be characterized exclusively by the neo-Protestant tradition, that is to say not the tradition of the original Reformers but that of the pietists and idealists, or whether Catholicism might also play its part in influencing national life.

Thenceforward there began, besides the conflict in "church politics", a real "*Kulturkampf*", not a religious strife such as the Thirty Years' War. The open conflict that broke out immediately after the foundation of the "Protestant empire" of the Hohenzollerns and was accompanied by the less noticed continuation of the Prussian Union in Hesse against the resistance, forcibly suppressed, of a cluster of "insubordinate pastors", ended in the retirement of the State, as in the case of the mixed marriages dispute at Cologne. By its direct invasion of the ecclesiastical sphere, by its mass expulsions of religious, arrest of bishops, and punishment of parish priests, the State had stirred up against itself unexpected forces that took the modern intelligentsia completely by surprise. For the outsider, the only plausible explanation of the people's rallying round its clergy with such enthusiasm was that it had not yet been awakened to its national mission or was insufficiently "enlightened", that it had been treacherously incited by the clergy, and that it was acting from misguided motives of conscience. It was then (1874) that Lagarde published his *Diagnosis*, which was intended for highly cultivated readers and was subsequently incorporated in the *Deutsche Schriften*. It is true that in

this work he severely castigated the impossible legislation of the *Kulturkampf* period, but he proceeded to compose a future picture of a national German religion, quite apart from the Churches and, above all, entirely free from Romanism—a religion suited to the God-willed nature of the German nation. It was then, too, that Wilhelm Busch composed for the enlightened middle classes his *Pater Filuzius*, in which the title rôle was filled by a Jesuitical legacy-hunter who finally had the dogs set on him after having failed, for all his cunning, to prevent the lovely Angelica (personifying the Third Creed) succeeding to the heritage of the aged aunts Pauline and Petrine (the Reformed and Catholic Churches).

From a purely cultural point of view Busch was, to a certain extent, correct. Although the State withdrew from spheres which were regarded as essentially religious by the Church, but not by the State, there was a widespread realization of the principle that German profane culture was to be determined, not by the Reformed tradition nor by the spirit of Catholicism, but by the undefined Third Creed. Open religious enmity being considered bad form, and being restricted, apart from the plebeian, Socialistic free thought intended for the masses, to narrow circles (the Union of Monists, for example, in the twentieth century), there was a good deal of talk about the stoutheartedness of Luther and the glory of the Hohenstaufen, but these were merely side-scenes satisfying the national love of a romantic past. The real tradition went back no further than

the Great Elector [1] and broke off completely with the Thirty Years' War. All knowledge of previous events, apart from that provided by the historical novels of Gustav Freytag and Felix Dahn, was confined to a few disconnected incidents of an unequivocal tendentiousness : the victory of Arminius ; the massacre at Verden ; Canossa ; Barbarossa triumphing over Henry the Lion and, in conjunction with Frederick II, as protector of the new Empire in the Kyffhäuser ; the burning of Huss ; and finally, Luther at Worms, or, as " the creator of the German language ", in the Wartburg, where, incidentally, a legendary minstrel competition was also supposed to have taken place, as was testified by Heinrich Heine and Richard Wagner, who evinced a curious unanimity on the subject. This, then, was approximately the current idea of past history by which the uniform culture that was to set the tone throughout the new Reich took its bearings.

Certainly the Catholic world, whose traditions were entirely different, still continued to exist, but in its case also the problems that it had to answer, if only in polemical fashion, were set by the uniform culture, though it did not fully realize the fact. The Catholic had his own ideas of German history, but at the same time he was constantly endeavouring to prove that in spite of his absolute refusal to recognize the value of the Reformation, his resentment of the attacks that had been made on his Church in the nineteenth century, and his unques-

[1] Frederick William, Elector of Brandenburg (1620–1688).

tioning obedience to dogma and the Papacy that expounded it, he was nevertheless " thoroughly national " and was making an important contribution to modern culture. This " cultural Catholicism " made a deep impression on Catholic youth, even then, on account of its rising superior to the old-fashioned rejection of modern life based on the old imperial and *Kulturkampf* traditions. But at the same time it by no means betokened a weakening of loyalty to the Church ; on the contrary, it set out to prove that the Church was the true principle of progress—to quote the words of Schell—and that the Catholic, without relinquishing the Faith, could be a first-class critical scholar. He was also fully capable of mastering modern economic life and was consequently entitled to raise the cry for more " Catholic Councillors of Commerce ". Above all he demanded to be treated as a " national " in the fullest sense of the term, for though he had not entirely forgotten the old Catholic pan-German tradition, he regarded it not as a living force, but merely as a piece of history.

Alongside and within this cultural Catholicism, which began in the 'nineties, after the final cessation of the *Kulturkampf*, persisted the realization that the Catholic would have to fight for public recognition in the State, especially in Prussia and such Liberally-governed States as Baden. Equal rights were not going to be conceded him without further ado. The most likely instrument by which this equality might be obtained was the Centre party, which, apart from the few years during which the group of

parties led by Bülow was in power, was the mainstay of the Imperial Government. Charges of sinister designs of appropriating the reins of government and of ultramontane tendencies were rebutted by its interdenominational character as testified by the membership of several Evangelical deputies and by its consistent approval of a Liberal constitutional regime in which every citizen would be equal in the eyes of the law and the administration, and would be able to rise to high official positions, and in which there would be real tolerance in every sphere of life.

This Catholic world, which was recognized as an actuality on account of the existence of the Centre party, was a world apart. Even when there was no question of any animosity reminiscent of the *Kulturkampf* it was looked upon as being peculiarly inimical to modern life. Before the War the Catholic Church was likened to a ruin projecting out of the Middle Ages into modern times. The Catholic who was open to consider the questions of the hour was considered, however much he might protest, as a not quite reliable son of his Church, in whom, unbeknown to himself, the spirit of the age or patriotism was at loggerheads with the Roman faith, Romanism, Jesuitism, and Ultramontanism. This conception was strengthened by the disagreements to which movements within the Catholic body seemed to lead. The activities of Catholic personalities such as Baumstark and Franz Xaver Kraus, and the difficulties of Schell, Ehrhard, and other Catholic theologians led men to suppose that not only a religious, spiritually cultural Catholicism, but a

political, unspiritual Catholicism, was at work, and that the latter had created a brilliant organization in the Centre party. Further, the unlikely composition of the party and its skill in tactical manœuvring induced even those who were disposed to judge it fairly and admired its readiness to adopt Liberal Democratic methods, to regard it as being, when all was said and done, an incomprehensible, uncanny force.

It would be erroneous, therefore, to suppose that the uniform culture was in conscious opposition to the existing denominations, in particular the Catholic. Certainly it was strongly imbued with the spirit of worldly Protestantism, but it had its attractions for Catholics as well. The self-respect of the Catholic body was increased by its efforts to prove, firstly, that it was not by any means living in the Middle Ages or in the narrow patriarchal world of Catholic bishoprics anterior to the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire ; secondly, that, as the *Görresgesellschaft* showed, it could develop a modern Catholic school of study of a specifically German kind ; thirdly, that it could play a leading part in the modern social movement both by its highly important participation in social politics and by its workers' unions and other organizations ; and fourthly, that, as was shown by its demand for equal rights, it was fully qualified to be included in the empire, the empire constructed by Bismarck. The *Kulturkampf* was a regrettable episode in German history, but it was finished and done with, just as enlightened Radicalism had been effectively coun-

tered by the cultural achievements of the faithful. Friedrich Fuchs was able to write in the *Muth-Festschrift* (Munich) of 1927 : " National unity was emphatically stressed by all who had suffered from the separation of Church and culture, *i.e.*, national culture. Schell demanded of the German spirit that it should play its part in realizing the ideal of Catholicism in every age. This was its principal mission, ' being much more naturally inclined than the Latin spirit to a heartfelt, rational, and moral conception of religion '. And when Bishop Keppler turned against the reformers who were endeavouring to reconcile Catholicism with modern culture, he did so with exactly the same national, or rather nationalistic, feelings. ' Let them transfer themselves across the Vosges ', he said. ' In France God's word is but an empty phrase ; in Germany it is taken very much to heart '."

Accordingly, when the new Reich had been in existence only a few decades the desired uniform culture was almost fully realized, and subsequent to a light setback resulting from the Modernist dissensions at the beginning of the century, there seemed to be nothing left to be desired when, on the outbreak of the War there was a universal party truce (in accordance with the spirit of which the laws against the Jesuits, dating from the *Kulturkampf* period, were repealed), almost simultaneously the " political Catholic " Count Hertling became Chancellor to the Protestant German Emperor, and Peter Spahn, who for many years had been the chairman of the Centre party, entered the Prussian

Cabinet as Minister of Justice. This was in 1917—four hundred years after the nailing up of Luther's theses and one hundred years after the formation of the Prussian Union—when Protestants and Catholics from every German-speaking district were fighting together on all fronts in one army. How could it seem but that the religious differences that had divided the German people for four centuries had definitely receded into the background (with no prejudice to the strict adherence of the Catholics to their dogmas or to their unwavering fidelity to the Papacy) and that, in the minds of many Protestants, they had dwindled to a mere difference in ritual, in abstract, traditional dogma, in the methods of ministering to the faithful—in short, that they had been rendered utterly innocuous? Had not even Fichte given his approval of Catholicism over a hundred years before, at the time of the national renaissance, when in his *Addresses to the German Nation* he said that even the Catholic Church had not been impervious to the vivifying effect of the spirit of liberty that had come to the surface at the Reformation? Surely the " supra-denominational comradeship of the trenches " must be the national ideal and at the same time the irrefutable proof that far deeper than that which separated these defenders of their country (*i.e.*, their creeds) there lay something for which they were all ready to sacrifice their lives together—their German heritage? Was not this " experience of the trenches " ultimately a religious one? Would not this common religious and national or racial experience give birth to a new, universal

expression, a German Church, a Church in which the " German God " would be revered by Germans ? At any rate during the period in question these sentiments were widespread.

It is only when we consider the matter in this light—which, naturally enough, was not done at the time by those who were wedded to tradition or by those who looked on it merely as a literary speculation of a peculiarly fantastic kind—and view it against the background of four hundred years of preparation (sketched here in broad outline only)—it is only then that we can gauge the ardent longing and hopes for a national Church that inspire countless Germans of to-day, the confidence with which they look forward to its fulfilment, and the fanaticism with which they fight for its realization.

Democrats might be, it was their " Marxism " that was held responsible for the existence of Communists and writers of the *Weltbühne* type ; and no matter how firmly organs of the type of Georg Moenius's *Allgemeine Rundschau* might oppose what they considered was the Prussianized Centre party—for which they in their turn were attacked by supporters of the Centre—they, too, were used to bring " political Catholicism " into popular disrepute.

As time went on it became increasingly clearer that it was adherence either to the Opposition or to the " System " that was dividing the German nation into two. Compared with this, the old denominational cleavage was of only secondary importance. The situation was admirably described by Karl Barth, especially so far as the Protestants were concerned, in his famous essay on the crisis that faced the Evangelical Church : " The association and *Bindestrich*[1] between ' Christianity ' and ' nationality ', ' Evangelical ' and ' German ', have gradually become so definitely a part of the written and spoken stock-in-trade of our Church that it would be no exaggeration to say that this *Bindestrich* has now become the real criterion of ecclesiastical orthodoxy." [2]

Needless to say, nothing of this kind could be said about the Catholics, but even among them the gap between such groups as those which revolved round the *Rhein-Mainische Volkszeitung* (to say nothing of the Pacifist supporters of *Das Frohe Leben*) and the

[1] *Bindestrich* = hyphen.
[2] *Zwischen den Zeiten*, 1931, Part 2.

decidedly "national" Catholics who had gone "German National" with Martin Spahn and sat on Catholic committees within that party—was hardly less deep in the non-religious sphere than that which separated the main body of German Evangelicals from the little group of Left-minded Protestants that was continuing to dwindle despite its highly respected publications. In the eyes of the German Evangelicals, who distributed themselves according to temperament among the various National parties, ranging from the Right to the Middle, it was the latter who were the heretics, as was evidenced by the theological-political polemics waged by Hirsch, Althaus and others against the "Reichsbanner Democrats" and the theological professor Martin Rade.

Thus the post-War period merely confirmed and accentuated the tendency that had existed long before the War and was most accentuated during it. The Germans were united or separated, not, as they had been up to the eighteenth century, by their interpretation of Christianity, but by their relations towards the (Prussian) German State, *i.e.*, to what, under the formative influence of this State, had begun to take shape as the German nation. In these relations the practising Christian held fast to the creed he happened to profess, but the existence of the other creed was, to him, a tragic error which with the increase of national unity would recede into the background or by some unknown means completely disappear.

This is the explanation of the National Socialists'

indomitable resolve to bring about uniformity throughout the nation. It is also the explanation of the enthusiasm, rightly compared with that of 1914, with which those Germans of all creeds who belonged to or favoured the Nationalist Opposition welcomed the decisive overthrow, in 1933, of the black-red-gold alliance and the acceptance of government by this Opposition. And thirdly, it explains the extravagant hopes with which they were filled as a result of this event.

At the same time it must be noted that the relations of the clergy and the laity towards the event of January 30th, 1933, were necessarily very different in the case of the two creeds. Undoubtedly there were Catholics as well as Protestants who had supported the Nationalist Opposition and who, accordingly, welcomed the Hitler-Papen-Hugenberg Government as a turning away from error that would have been fatal not only to the nation but also to the Church, but although statistics seem to show that there were many Catholics who no longer voted for the so-called "Catholic" parties (the Centre and the Bayrische Volkspartei), the hierarchy still continued to give them their support. And, above all, they certainly remained as much in touch with those sections of the people who were in sympathy with Catholicism as Protestantism—in spite of the various bodies that rejected and opposed the association—remained in touch with the parties of the Right. Correspondingly, the political and social vicissitudes that had befallen Catholicism and Protestantism during the fourteen

years of the so-called " Systematic " period were entirely different.

The Catholics had feared that the upheaval of November, 1918, would mean another *Kulturkampf*. Adolf Hoffmann, the notorious free-thinking agitator, who had established himself for a brief period in the Ministry of Public Worship and Education, seemed the first figure of a threatening future. But the fear soon passed, on it becoming evident that the Centre had weathered the storm and was necessary even to the Socialist leaders of the new Germany, firstly, to counterbalance their Democratic allies, subsequently, as a frankly indispensable partner in the coalition, and finally, as it was mistakenly imagined, to preserve their very existence. The time seemed to have come for the serious consideration of the liberties and demands for equality that, in spite of everything, had been refused or withheld by the old regime. The Weimar Constitution put an end to special laws for particular classes of the population. Above all, it guaranteed the unrestricted right of forming associations. The absolute separation of Church and State was proclaimed, but in practice the privileged position occupied by the recognized Churches was not affected. And so, soon after 1918, there came about that which the historian Philipp Funk has described as a " monastic springtide ", namely, the establishment of new branches of the religious orders, the foundation of numerous convents, and the opening of schools staffed by priests and nuns—all of which things appeared to many Protestant bodies as an autumnal

wind presaging another Counter-Reformation. Secondly, under the Republic, the bishops were a force to be reckoned with, as their wishes were made known through the agency of the indispensable Centre party. Thirdly, the Catholics might even try to safeguard their new liberties and their old rights by means of written treaties and thereby make themselves independent of the fluctuations of Parliamentary majorities. Concordats were effected, significantly enough with the aid of completely different allies in the various States: in Prussia with the Social Democrats and the Democrats, in Bavaria with the "Right" groups (the German Nationals being represented by the Bavarian Minister of Justice, Gürtner, who is now Hitler's Reich Minister of Justice), in Baden with the Liberals. On account of the chaotic state of party politics it was not possible to effect either a concordat or an educational law applying to the whole Reich; nevertheless it seemed that a state of affairs which in the Wilhelmian era the Centre regarded as an unattainable ideal was realized under the Republic, namely complete liberty for the Catholic religion and a policy regarding Government service that did not discriminate against Catholics. Nor did the dreaded result of democratization come to pass: the separation of Church and State, which would deprive the Catholics of every form of State support, abolish their schools, and cut off clerical stipends.

This opening up of new fields of activity for Catholics—who hitherto, no matter how staunchly they had supported the Imperial Government and

the principle of legitimate monarchy, had felt themselves to be slighted or at most tolerated—led to the appearance of symptoms that were spoken of as the dawn of practical politics. There was a general belief in the overwhelming power of large organizations, in the decisive importance of large numbers ; above all, the Catholics congratulated themselves on the political successes that enabled them to be granted subsidies for purposes that would be of benefit to the nation as a whole. It seemed to be only a question of developing and consolidating the practical successes that had been gained.

It must be noted here that the new democratic liberties in no way conflicted with Catholic political doctrine, as the theological theoreticians were able to demonstrate, although the strict interpretation of the law and political fairness led inevitably to distasteful concessions. Thus, for example, it was necessary to give effective recognition to free thinkers as a community with a *Weltanschauung*, just as the Churches were similar communities, and the principle of equal rights involved the maintenance of non-denominational schools, though their legal position was hotly disputed (which fact was keenly exploited by the opponents of the Centre party), and it remained a moot point whether these schools were not a violation of the natural law, seeing that they frequently taught contempt for authority in any shape or form. On the other hand, practical politics permitted certain corrections to be made to this over-formal democratic trend to the Left. The Bayrische Volkspartei showed what might be

accomplished in this way. Resenting the excessiveness of the concessions made by the Centre in the name of the Weimar Constitution, it formed an alliance with the parties of the Right and steered an anti-Marxist, Conservative course which quickly led to a concordat favourable to the Church and precluded such undesirable phenomena as non-denominational schools.

It made no difference whether the course was to the Left or to the Right ; the decisive factor was the practical tactics employed. No one seemed to realize that the time was approaching when the " Third Creed " would no longer be confident, as it would have been in the nineteenth century, of making gradual headway as the real national *Weltanschauung*, but would be militantly aggressive against all others and would slough off its superficial Liberalism and become a new and intolerant *Weltanschauung*. It was thought possible, in spite of all the criticism that had been levelled against *Kultur*, to retain the rules of the game, the conceptions, and the ordinances of the Wilhelmian era, either in a democratic-Liberal, or possibly in a more Conservative-traditionalistic form. It was hoped that the Catholic organizations, which in 1918 had survived the collapse of the monarchy and had warded off the menace of free thought, would continue to function in the more Conservative and authoritative age that lay ahead. Erzberger and his successors would be forgotten, the " Catholic Conservative heritage " would be remembered, and the persons and ideas that the former had repressed

would decide the policy of the Catholics, and possibly the existing political forms would have to be abandoned. As early as 1920 Stegerwald, the trade union leader and member of the Centre party, spoke of the need of a new Christian party, and thenceforward there was a continuous undertone of gossip about the desirability of forming a coalition of all the Conservative and Christian, but not reactionary, bodies that were discontented with insipid Liberalism. Finally, during Brüning's chancellorship, the murmuring increased in volume, principally on account of designs of this nature being ascribed not only to the Chancellor himself but even to the prelate Kaas, the chairman of the Centre party. Their presumed purpose was to confirm the co-operation of Catholicism with the national will.

These plans were especially attractive to those who were anxious to arrange a meeting between Catholicism and *Kultur*, or rather the spirit of the age, for the word "*Kultur*" had gradually acquired a somewhat invidious significance. It seemed to imply the concomitance of unduly active organizations and was unpleasantly reminiscent of pre-War Liberalism. There was too great a danger of its being taken to mean the *Kultur* of the Wilhelmian Opposition, with which finally even its representatives were disgusted. Hans Johst, who was deeply rooted in the spirit of the age, expressed their feelings admirably when he expostulated in his *Schlageter*: "Whenever I hear the word *Kultur* I feel like cocking my revolver!" Similarly, Catholic writers were

among the first to use the words "actuality" or "*Existenz*" instead of *Kultur*, though neither they nor anyone who shared their views were necessarily inclined towards the Right, in the manner of Stegerwald or Brüning. Many of them, together with the *Rhein-Mainische Volkszeitung*, played with the idea that the Catholics were essential for the realization of Socialism as the final stage of national evolution and that thereby they would endue Marxism with a new and deeper meaning.

Most of them, however, rejected the Centre party as being too Liberal, too mechanical, and too unintellectually practical. In their eagerness to be purely intellectual or religious many failed to observe that the Catholic revival which was due to them was nevertheless associated, by forces which were not really in favour of the Catholic cause, with the rise of the Centre to a position of participation, nay, of predominance, in the Government. These Catholic religious intellectuals underestimated the importance of the results that would have accrued from their own activity, which might have shown itself through the medium of professorships or publications or through the more or less pro-Catholic atmosphere. They thought Catholicism's return from exile, to quote the expression used by Peter Wust, was permanent, that it had come about through the self-destruction of anti-religious "enlightenment", and that the alleged menace to Catholic public life was only propaganda used in support of the Centre party and the organizations for Catholic action that co-operated with it. Their theoretical

standard was far higher than that of the Catholic bodies that influenced the policy of the two "Catholic" parties and the various associations. Personalities such as Romano Guardini, Erich Przywara, S.J., and the Benedictines at Maria-Laach were taken with the utmost seriousness by the German intelligentsia, far more so, even from a purely objective point of view, than the "Reform Catholics" before the War.

Going to the root of the problems of the day, they saw that it was not sufficient to hold the positions of power gained by the Catholics, that the educational problem, for example, was not solved by the safeguarding of the denominational primary school and the training of its teachers. They realized the danger that Catholicism was incurring of its own accord in its excessive adaptation to the *Zeitgeist* in its active manifestations, nor were they unaware of the unobtrusive but pernicious penetration into the ranks of the faithful of modern secularization, which was turning the Church into one of many "communities with a *Weltanschauung*" and "preserved" the religious denominations as historical forms.

Unlike the pre-War Catholics they sensed that the desire of many educated Catholics to see the gap between the religion of their parents and the culture of their academic and other teachers bridged as far as possible was to be fulfilled not by any union with the *Zeitgeist* but only by protesting, by way of cultural criticism, against the spirit that prevailed in public life, in which a secularizing, and consequently debasing, tendency could always be detected.

But we are speaking here of groups of thinkers that were unable to sway the German public, or even the Catholic portion of it. It was frequently harmful for them that they were used by the representatives of practical politics to justify their attitude, to second their claims respecting their personal political promotion, organizations, or finance. And so it came about that despite these groups German Catholicism acquired the reputation of being a mere beneficiary of the troublous years 1918–1932, and a most unprincipled beneficiary that was enamoured of the disruptive and destructive spirit of the times, and for that reason fought against the national revival. Worst of all, the belief spread that the Catholic Church was far too closely bound up with the power won by the Centre party since 1918, with positions that were being used for the advantage not of the people or religion, but of certain cliques and interested persons. This was the opinion not only of anti-Clericals but also of numerous Catholics who were definitely opposed to the Centre party or who, as individualists (such as Walter Dirks), had no liking for the mass-production methods of large organizations.

Whereas the Catholic Church seemed to have profited from the eclipse of the Protestant imperial glory and the period of national humiliation, the Protestants felt that for them these matters were solely a cause for mourning. It was the Protestant Churches that had to bear the brunt of the atheistic propaganda and the movement in favour of seceding from the Church. It was their members who

suffered from the *Personalpolitik* that was to procure for the Catholics the " parity " that had hitherto been withheld from them. It was these Churches which had to tolerate Social Democrats as " Ministers for Church Affairs ". They were given written guarantees by the State (as in Bavaria and Baden) only after the Catholics had been given theirs ; in Prussia they were almost two years behind them. Most galling of all was it to be dependent on the goodwill of the Centre party.

However, even in the Protestant Churches there were leaders, such as Otto Dibelius, the General Superintendent of the Kurmark, who proclaimed that the Church had entered on a new era now that it had been freed from the rule by which the head of the State was also the head of the Church—a rule originating in the secular interference with Church reform which Luther had intended to be only a temporary measure.

The way in which hitherto unknown masses of the people flocked to meetings of protest against Marxist godlessness and to demonstrations in support of the hereditary Church of their forebears left their organizers with a feeling of elation. " We have now a fighting force of the Protestant rank and file ", they said, " such as has never before been mobilized in German lands. *Habemus ecclesiam*—We have a Church ". These proceedings filled Karl Barth with indignation ; in his opinion they were more a demonstration of anti-Marxist and anti-Republican emotion than of Christian faith. Referring to these successes in his reply to Dibelius, he spoke of the

German Protestant Church as being a body of confirmed " Laodiceans " who were enough to drive a sincere Christian to despair. " Its utterances are almost invariably couched in the barbaric, malevolent language of the heathen."

It is true that the founding of the German Evangelical Church Union on May 25th, 1922—an amalgamation, if only a loose one, of the twenty-eight State Churches—provided for the first time a basis on which its members might indulge their belief in a supra-territorial German Church, its new purple banner sparing them the necessity of displaying political colours. It is true that there arose an " œcumenical movement " which gave Protestantism the impression of belonging to a " world-wide ", supra-national community such as the Catholic Church actually is (*vide* the meetings at Stockholm in 1925 and at Lausanne in 1927), but it was precisely this movement that aroused not so much an internationally Protestant feeling of elation as a specifically German Evangelical feeling of suspicion. What ? They had had meetings with the English, yes, even with the French ? They had sat at the same table with them, and had discussed other matters than the " war guilt lies " (the usual way of referring to the allegation that the Central Powers were solely responsible for the outbreak of the War) ? They had denied their own Lutheranism, with its conception of the world as incorrigibly sinful, and had allowed themselves to be infected with Anglo-Saxon optimism and the " Calvinistic " idea of building up God's kingdom on earth, which

everyone knew to be the cause of Wilson's crusade against Germany and consequently of Germany's defeat? Had they imbibed democratic or even pacifist ideas from these "Western Churches"?

In the eyes of the vast majority of practising Protestant laymen and their pastors, it was hardly possible to be guilty of a greater crime. Democracy had been the most deadly of the baits with which the Western Powers had induced the honest German to revolt against the Hohenzollern monarchy which had made Germany united and great. And pacifism, in the form in which it was practised by certain groups belonging to the Left, was sheer betrayal of one's country.

As Karl Barth had foreseen, the German Evangelical Church—with the exception of some insignificant Liberalizing groups (most notably, perhaps, the supporters of "*Die Christliche Welt*") which had dwindled away together with the once powerful Democratic party, led by such men as Naumann, Weber and Troltsch—found that its fortunes were unconditionally linked with the "National Opposition". This state of affairs was not exposed so openly in the official manifestoes of the Church governments and the writings of leading personalities as in the publications of the Evangelical Union or of Professors Hirsch, Althaus, Brunstädt, Rendtorff, and, by means of more subtle dialectics, Gogarten (to mention only a few of the best-known names), the reason being that the so-called Church leaders had no intention of abandoning, or even diminishing, by open hostility to the "System", the immensely

greater power which, owing to the considerable autonomy of the Church brought about by its being permanently financed by the State, had accrued to them personally since 1918, previous to which they had been merely second-class officials.

For this reason they finally accepted, after some resistance, the so-called " political " clauses of the agreement which the North German Churches made with the State in 1931 and by which they engaged not to fill their highest offices with clerics who were not *personæ gratæ* with the Government. Not that this tactical concession in any way altered the Church leaders' real attitude. In this respect their relations with the so-called " religious " Socialists, with whom the last Socialist Prussian Minister for Education and Public Worship was in sympathy, were characteristic, as was also the attitude adopted by the Prussian Church authorities and several theological faculties in the notorious case of Günther Dehn, professor of theology at Halle, who, on the mere suspicion of being pacifistic, was prevented by the students from fulfilling his academic duties.

As soon as anyone had incurred the slightest suspicion of not being " national " according to the lights of the Right Opposition, he had ended his career in the Evangelical Church. It was, therefore, fully in accordance with " the nature of things " that, in 1932, Protestant Germany should vote for the baptized Catholic Adolf Hitler as President of the Reich because it imagined that the practising Protestant Hindenburg was being led in tow by the political Catholic Brüning. What did it avail the

latter that he could have claimed to have joined, in November, 1918, the "*Gruppe Winterfeldt*", the last formation that had been prepared to suppress the revolution? What did it avail him that he had been credited, rightly or wrongly, with the intention of overcoming the narrow denominationalism of the policy pursued by the Centre party and that on the strength of this even the presumably strictly Lutheran and Nationalist writer Stapel had set his hopes on him as "the Christian statesman"? What did it avail him that he had considered it the foremost duty of his Cabinet to put an end to Parliamentarianism in Germany and to assist to power the practically-minded section of that very Nationalist Opposition whose "radical wing" was now utterly rejecting him? There could be no clearer indication of the direction in which public opinion was moving, there could be no surer sign that the Reich of the Weimar Constitution was coming to an end, than the situation at the time of the Presidential election in 1932.

The Catholics of the Centre party and the Socialists had grown so much accustomed to the German (or rather Prussian) tradition, their first contact with which had inspired them with feelings of indifference or even repulsion, that they now voted for the re-election of its classic representative, Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, whom, at the time of his first election seven years previously, they had violently opposed. They voted for him in the hope that he and his Cabinet, which was already more or less unconstitutional, would carry out that tradition

against whatever of the "black and red" policy had been condemned by the Right, in a milder fashion than would Adolf Hitler, who was setting himself up as the renovator and consummator of the same tradition. No wonder that Hitler was perfectly certain that with lumps of sugar and the whip—namely, the motives of hope and fear, which even in that election of 1932 were the chief emotions that swayed the voters—he would finally succeed in inducing every German to subscribe to the *Weltanschauung* which is simply the logical continuation, and the final secularization, of the tradition which for decades past had had nothing in common with Christianity, whether the Protestant or the Catholic form, except in name and terminology.

THE "THIRD CHURCH" AS THE COMPLETION OF THE "THIRD REICH" [1]

ONE of the most amazing instances of human self-deception—which, unfortunately, are all too frequent—is that there are hundreds of thousands of unsuspecting Christians who after reading his book, *Mein Kampf*, are somehow able to consider Adolf Hitler as a well-wisher or even, due allowance being made for error in matters of detail, as a firm adherent, of the Christian faith. No one in Germany would dare to make a public and impartial inquiry into the religious content of this work, of which millions of copies have been distributed throughout the country, accompanied by the most intensive official publicity—the work which Ministerpräsident Göring, speaking at Breslau as recently as October 26th, 1935, designated as "the fundamental document" of National Socialism. Consequently, controversial religious literature in Germany, no matter whether it emanates from the Christian or the neo-pagan camp, invariably presents a distorted picture of the "Führer's" attitude towards Christianity. Since the key to the policy of the N.S.D.A.P.[2] in

[1] *I.e.*, the National Socialist State. The first *Reich*, or Empire, lasted from the ninth century till 1806, the second was that established by Bismarck (1871–1918).

[2] *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Labour Party).

cultural and ecclesiastical affairs, and that of the State which is in its power, is to be found only in his book, the official exposition of the National Socialist party programme, we have no option but to investigate the fundamental religious views set forth in this Bible of the Third Reich.

We shall begin by discussing the passages which are relatively frank, for without them it is impossible to grasp the true meaning of those which are cited *ad nauseam* by Christians as a proof of the Führer's goodwill, but where, in fact, he is not sincere.

Our first quotation, from Part II (Ch. 5), which deals with the National Socialist *Weltanschauung* (world theory) and organization, seems to us to be more enlightening than any other.[1]

> " A world theory is intolerant and is not content with being one Party amongst a number of other Parties ; it insists on exclusive and persistent recognition of itself and on an absolutely new conception of the whole of public life in accordance with its views. Thus it cannot tolerate continuance of a force representing the former conditions.
>
> " It is the same with religions.
>
> " Christianity was not content with merely erecting its own altar ; it was forced to proceed to destroy the altars of the heathen. Such fanatical intolerance alone made it possible to

[1] Wherever possible, extracts (with their page-references) have been taken from *My Struggle* (Hurst & Blackett, 1933), which, however, is only an abridged translation of the original work, *Mein Kampf*.

build up that adamantine creed; it is an absolutely essential condition of its existence.

" The objection may well be made that most of these phenomena of world history are productions of a specifically Jewish mentality, that this kind of intolerance and fanaticism is the very embodiment of the Jewish character. This may well be so, and we may deeply deplore the fact and with an all too justifiable misgiving determine its appearance in the history of mankind as something that had been foreign to it hitherto—but this makes no difference to the fact that this is the condition of things to-day. The men who want to rescue our German people from its present condition have not to worry about how nice it would be if such and such a thing did not exist, but they must try to make up their minds how the actual state of affairs can be done away with. A world theory animated by devilish intolerance can be broken only by a new conception impelled by a similar spirit and fought for with an equally strong will, but a conception that is pure and sincere.

" The individual may realize with pain that with the appearance of Christianity there came into the much freer world of the ancients the first instance of spiritual terrorism. He cannot, however, dispute the fact that thenceforth the world has been oppressed and dominated by this force, and that force is broken only by force, and terrorism only by terrorism. Only by building up on these methods can a new condition of affairs be brought about."

Here Hitler says quite outspokenly : terrorism and fanaticism are essentially Jewish ; spiritual terrorism came for the first time to the much freer antique world (clearly that of Western Europe) with Christianity ; a new " world theory " can succeed only by " fanatical intolerance " and terrorism.

But at the same time does not Hitler draw a distinction between " world theory " and " religion " ? Are not those Christian theologians right who seek to prove—making use of this distinction as did the Catholic professor of theology, Eschweiler in 1933—that the exclusive claims of the naturalistic German National Socialist " world theory ", so far from being directed against the supernatural Christian faith, is fully realized within it ? Certainly Hitler distinguishes between world theory and religion, though the distinction is often very fine. He explains " world theory problems ", for instance, as " subjects for almost religious conviction ". He speaks of " party dogmas " instead of just " dogmas " and of a " confession of political faith " (p. 184). Nor must we omit to mention the famous passage where he holds up the Catholic Church as a model to be copied, inasmuch as it " is not prepared to sacrifice a single syllable of its doctrines ", although " the body of its doctrine clashes with exact science and research on many points—unnecessarily in many respects " ! (p. 184).

What, then, *is* the difference between " world theory " and " religion " according to Hitler ? He has been very careful not to give a direct answer to the question in his book, but were his hints

be formulated into a definition it would read as follows : A world theory claims to say everything essential that there is to be said about this life on earth and from a practical standpoint totally to govern it ; a religious belief, on the other hand, is an aggregate of dogmas concerning the world to come, which " helps to raise man above the level of an animal existence " and thus " contributes to the solidification and the safeguarding of his existence ", but it has nothing to say in earthly matters any more than a political, " this-world " movement ought to interfere with its " other-world " theory, provided it keeps within its proper bounds. This is what is meant by : " Political parties ought to have nothing to do with religious problems, as long as they are not undermining the morals of the race ; in the same way religion should not be mixed up with Party intrigues ". (p. 56.)

Hitler considers that this duty of keeping religion and world theory separate is especially incumbent on a people that is as religiously divided (*i.e.*, divided as to its creeds) as the German. Wherefore, by reason of its supersensitiveness in matters of belief, every temptation to mix world theory with religion must be resisted

> " even when it is inspired with the idea of promoting the higher interests of the national community. For religious feeling is still more deeply seated than any political or national expediency. And this condition will not be altered by driving the two creeds into bitter warfare against each

other, but it could be altered if by mutual conciliation the nation were given a future whose greatness would gradually have a pacificatory effect even in this sphere."

What is it, then, that will bring about a state of affairs in which religious feeling will no longer be so deeply seated as the people's welfare, as Hitler understands it? A great national future, the foundation for which, according to Hitler himself and the National Socialists who have played a part in public affairs, has already been laid.

"The most overwhelming proof of this was afforded on the last occasion when our people was summoned before the judgment-seat of history to fight a life-and-death struggle for existence. As long as there was leadership the people did its duty in the most impressive manner. Both Protestant pastor and Catholic priest helped enormously to sustain our powers of resistance which held out for so long, not only at the Front but also, and even more, at home. During those years, and especially at the first blaze-up, for both camps there was only one Holy German Empire, for whose preservation and continued existence each man besought his own particular Heaven."

This gives us the underlying motive of the national Church idea, which we touched on at the end of our introduction, namely the comradeship of the soldiers at the Front which surmounted all denominational barriers, and we may now sum up Hitler's individual

suggestions. For Hitler, Christianity is an " other-world " religion which, unfortunately, was forced on the Nordic peoples by means of a typically Jewish form of terrorism. It is true that, like every " other-world " religion, so long as it is believed in, it helps to stabilize existence and, in time of war, to stiffen national resistance, especially on the home front, but on no account may it shape the conditions of *this* world, least of all those of the Germanic race. To repeat the pithy formula uttered by Kerrl (appointed by Hitler as Reich Minister for Church Affairs) on October 16th, 1935, in Berlin: " It [religion] has nothing to do with the practical affairs of life " and, since it threatens to split the Germans into various denominations, it must be thrust into the background by great national, unifying, experiences. This is Hitler's opinion as expressed in his book, according to which he has no intention of declaring war on the Church, but, on the contrary, is doing his level best to whistle off those of his followers who favour over-drastic measures and want to emulate the escapades of a Dinter or a General Ludendorff, which do no good to his cause from a propagandist point of view.

It is for this reason that the book contains passages that are continually cited in Christian circles, both by the Confessional Church (as in the *Briefe zur Lage*, *i.e.*, " Letters on the Present Situation ") and by the Catholics (*e.g.*, Archbishop Gröber). On one page Hitler condemns the idea that a religious reformation may be attained by means of a political organization. On another page

we find the surmise that is constantly quoted against the neo-pagans, namely that all those who would like to reform religion on " an early-Germanic foundation " must be " emissaries of those powers who would be sorry to see the recovery of our people ". And on a third page occurs the dictum that is so much in favour with apologists : " A political leader must never meddle with the religious doctrines and institutions of his people " (p. 56).

There is one reason for these passages which on careful examination will be found to be of the greatest importance. It is that " Any other attitude would lead to catastrophe, especially in Germany " (p. 56). This is why the above sentences were written in all seriousness. Hitler foresaw very clearly that nothing would be more dangerous for his movement than for the people to realize in good time that their faith was being taken away from them or was being gradually transformed. Consequently he has no desire to take it away or transform it so long as it confines itself to the next world, to metaphysical speculation and pious other-worldliness, and keeps its hands off this world. But should it prove recalcitrant, as it would have to be were it informed with a real love for Christ, should it follow in the steps of John the Baptist and refuse to connive at wrong as though it were right, should it not be content to be an emotional religiosity of " pure inwardness " or a " dogmatic faith " of some abstract pseudo-orthodoxy, then Hitler has nothing severe enough to say about the abuse of religion for political purposes. " At all periods of history there

have been unscrupulous rogues who have used religion to further their political ends, and it was nearly always politics and politics only which was the motive." But, continues the experienced propagandist, no more ghastly error could be committed than to attack the creed itself (" which these cunning foxes know perfectly well has nothing to do with politics ") and thus enable the scheming hypocrites to play the rôle of defenders of the faith.

We see, then, that it is the apparently pro-religious sentiments expressed in *Mein Kampf* that explain why the N.S.D.A.P. does not carry on an open *Kulturkampf* and will never do so as long as Hitler is its leader. For him, the Christian whose obedience to God brings him into conflict with one or other of the demands of the National Socialist world theory is nothing less than a hypocritical perverter of true, inward Christianity, which in its own real interest must be protected against this perverter. There are no such persons now as martyrs for the faith ; there are only currency smugglers, political priests, and squabbling pastors. This is the only practical conclusion to be drawn from Hitler's apparently pro-Christian theory.

In his treatment of the Churches Hitler has been faithful to the convictions expressed in his book. Without retreating an inch from his position, or making the slightest modification to the standpoint formulated in Art. 24 of the National Socialist party's programme—" We demand liberty for all religious denominations in the State, so far as they are not a danger to it and do not militate against the moral

feelings of the German race "—he was able, as Chancellor of the Reich, to make his famous governmental announcement of March 23rd, 1933 : " The National Government looks on the two Christian confessions as most important factors in the preservation of our people's welfare " and in the schools will " grant and guarantee them the exercise of the influence that befits them ". Similarly he was not gainsaying himself when he declared that " the forces of Christianity " were indispensable for the renascence of the German people. And even when he spoke of the interests of " *our* Christian faith " he was not necessarily hypocritical, for by these words he was not confessing to the Catholic Christian faith in which he had been brought up as the son of Catholic parents, but was merely stating the historical fact that the overwhelming majority of the German people confessed to some sort of " Christian " faith.

Even when, a few months later, at the meeting of Nazi leaders at Bad Godesberg on August 27th, 1933, Hitler declared (according to the uncontradicted report published by several " German Christian " journals) that Christianity was incapable of uniting the Germans and that only an entirely new world theory was capable of doing so, he was really adding nothing to what he had already said in his book, *Mein Kampf*. He was only expressing rather more explicitly the fact that he was perfectly well aware of the aim which he intended to accomplish : the setting of his world theory in exactly the same position as that formerly occupied in Germany

by the Christian faith, which in spite of secularization had set the standard of and regularized its public life. He openly expressed the same idea in his concluding speech at the Reich Party Congress at Nuremberg in 1935 : " Christianity provided the first combination of all branches of the German race into a higher unity, a conceptual complex that was both a world theory and a religion, and consequently a universally accepted system of morality ". The National Socialist world theory, on the other hand, is, in his opinion, the modern, living, and, as it seems to him, eternal substance. This substance, according to Hitler, is the people, which certainly took some time in becoming an historical reality, but which, with proper self-realization and government, *i.e.*, when it is a National Socialist people, will never perish.

> " When we conceive the people as that which is permanent and existent, we realize that it is our sole ideal. It is only the preservation of the people that ensures the existence and the effectiveness of ideas. Conversely its destruction reveals their worthlessness and insubstantiality. Even religion has no purpose unless it contributes to the preservation of the living substance of mankind. For once the people is destroyed as such, neither religion nor the State survives as an everlasting phenomenon."

These are his fundamental principles ; what follows is merely illustrations of them, given, for

example, by way of an attack on the religion of the Aztecs and the Incas. The experienced politician knew very well that his hearers would apply his observations to themselves when he inferred that these remote peoples were created for the benefit of the priests and their teachings. " But when these peoples perished, their teachers and their priests perished with them."

Hitler, therefore, had certainly no intention of creating the impression that he placed religion on a level with racial idealism as " an end in itself ", still less that he recognized religion to be on a higher level. For him, religion is a means to an end, at the most a symbolical formula, and in proportion as the Christian denominations fail to fulfil " their purpose, the preservation of the living substance " of the German people (as he sees it), they are superfluous or even harmful. " They have failed ", he said, in the fight against Judaism and Marxism. They have failed, too, he declared in an address to the same congress a few days previously, in still producing " the same phenomena, akin to Marxism, that we have known for ages—priest-politicians who have mistaken their vocations "—although the National Socialist State had presented them with the Evangelical Reich Church, the Concordat with Rome, and the Twilight of the God-less.

It was high time, therefore, to replace these creeds by the National Socialist world theory, at any rate in so far as they claimed to shape our lives. And it was a moot question if and when it would also be " necessary " or possible to weld the two creeds

(without depriving them of any of their store of traditional religion) into a " Third Church " permeated with the National Socialist world theory —either to protect them against those " rogues " who would like to abuse their institutions to further their reactionary political ends, or by external organization to strengthen the deep-lying, inwardly religious bond of " our Christian faith " which surmounts the frontiers of creed. Afterwards this " Third Church " could be renamed " National Church ", or, if this was objected to by apprehensive folk, it might go under some such name as " The One Community of Christ for All Germans "—the title recently adopted by the Thuringian German Christians. Obviously, for purposes of political expediency, one could easily dispense with the objectionable word " Church " and assure the people that in accordance with Germanic tolerance no faith would be interfered with that was in harmony with the German spirit.

It was Alfred Rosenberg who deduced from his Leader's teaching the possibility of establishing a " Third Church ", and Hitler, by entrusting precisely this expounder with the supervision of all the training of the Party and its subsidiary organizations in a *Weltanschauung*, on the first anniversary of his seizure of power, proclaimed most definitely that he knew of no other man who had such a reliable knowledge of this selfsame *Weltanschauung*. At the same time, however, the Führer naturally no more took the responsibility for every detail of Rosenberg's *Mythus des* 20. *Jahrhunderts* than the Pope (according

to the Catholics themselves) supports with his doctrinal infallibility every sentence in an unofficial work written by a dogmatist merely because he appoints him secretary to the Congregation of the Index or the Holy Office.

When, therefore, we read the following extract from Rosenberg's *Mythus*, which deals with the establishment of a " German Church ", it is not the voice of Hitler himself that we hear, but only that of his most competent organ in these matters. The passage opens with the modest demand

> " that its [the ' German Church's '] adherents be not attacked by the members of the old Churches and that when the faithful are obviously transferring their allegiance they be allotted the requisite buildings for public worship. . . . A German Church cannot promulgate compulsory articles of faith which every member must ' believe ' on pain of eternal damnation. It will embrace communities which cling to beautiful Catholic customs (many of which are of Nordic origin), also those which favour the Lutheran forms of Christian worship, and those which prefer some other form. The German Church will grant equal rights even to those who have broken altogether with Church Christianity and have banded themselves into a new community (possibly as believers in Eckhart's soul-force). The conditions of membership already explained are the same for all.
>
> " The object, therefore, of founding a German

National Church is not the propagation of metaphysical assertions, nor to demand universal belief in historical or legendary narratives, but to create a feeling of one's own high value, to segregate those who amid the multiplicity of their religious and philosophic convictions have won for themselves a deep, inward confidence in their own nature, who have fought for an heroic conception of life and have been successful in their efforts. It is this spiritual conversion that seems to me to be more revolutionary than anything, for it is only this that realizes that the chief object of religious struggles hitherto—namely metaphysical, compulsory articles of faith (*i.e.*, dogmas)—are inessential and that the upholding of them is the affair of the individual, not of the people. Disputes about the relative humanity and divinity of Jesus, about love and grace, about the mortality or immortality of the soul, do not come within the purview of a Germanic revival of religion ; the condition of membership of the new community is the recognition of the values which have been displayed in Germanic dramatic art [meaning Richard Wagner ?] and at their highest level in the mysticism of Master Eckhart."

The extraordinary tolerance and modesty displayed by this National Church towards the " compulsory, metaphysical articles of faith " and " pious customs and legends ", which are apparently of no interest whatever to the men of " this world ", give place to the " devilish intolerance " and uncom-

promising attitude demanded by the Führer, immediately it becomes a question of life and morality here below instead of dogmas and feelings about the world to come. On this subject Rosenberg writes as follows, with " The Totalitarian National School " and " In Defence of the Germanic Ideal " as characteristic page-headings :

" The struggle for the schools has probably revealed the breakdown of modern times more clearly than any other phenomenon ; but at the same time it has proved the just claims of the Germanic ideal, which knows of no compromise and demands *supremacy* for itself. Religious creeds are not ends in themselves, but fluctuating means that should be used to further the national vital feeling and peculiarly Germanic values. Their failure to fulfil this function is a symptom of the diseased condition of the people's soul.

" Hitherto these creeds have been like cast-iron moulds which their adherents have tried to stamp onto living existence, that is to say the peoples. Hence the spiritual conflicts that ensued, and they will never cease until either the peoples disappear as conscious values and the Church denominations have won the day, or the peoples' existence has forced the Church to accept its laws of life. In the former case we can say good-bye to any natural form of life. In the latter case we shall see the beginning of a really honest way of thinking."

Rosenberg, then—as is borne out by the rest of

his *Mythus*—knows as well as his Führer that no half-measures are possible—it is a question of unqualified acceptance or refusal. He differs from Hitler in regarding the creeds as irreconcilable enemies of Germanism, his master tolerating them as factors in the preservation, if not in the revival, of the nation, so long as they confine themselves to the world to come. But he agrees with Hitler that the Churches are not to be exterminated ; he only wants to force upon them the nation's laws of life and thus bring the " spiritual conflicts " to an end. In his opinion, no conscientious German " could expect those who still believe in their Church to quit it ". He himself announced, in the spring of 1935, that he had no intention of leaving the Evangelical Church ; and his Church keeps him within its fold just as the Catholic Church still keeps Adolf Hitler, who was seen not so long ago in St. Hedwig's Cathedral in Berlin, attending a Requiem Mass for Marshal Pilsudski.

Both men could justify their actions on the strength of the interpretation given to the term " positive Christianity ", and, as is well known, the N.S.D.A.P. propagandists have made the most successful use of it. In his *Mythus* Rosenberg contrasts " positive Christianity " with Christianity as it exists to-day, as though the latter were a " negative " religion composed of Jewish, Syrian, and Etruscan elements. Actually, this " positive Christianity " is an anti-Christian, worldly religion, with blood and honour as its fundamental values. But where this definition is considered to be too drastic or too anti-Christian

it can assume less violent hues. It becomes equivalent to the " practical Christianity " of the Winter Relief Work. It becomes nothing more than the slogan " The Common Interest before Self ", and in this guise may be used with great effect against the " fruitless bickerings of pastors ". Or, finally, as merely " faith " in the world at large, it may be used as an antidote to disintegration and despair, to nihilism and Bolshevism, which have met their well-merited end, not as a result of the Churches' preaching, but through the action of Adolf Hitler. Not till his advent was it possible to practise the Christian faith in Germany—at least this is the recent testimony of Göring and Kerrl.

From the standpoint of the Hitlerian world theory this is perhaps the most fundamental reason for the new, though " camouflaged ", substitute religion, as is now openly proclaimed from time to time even by the National Socialists themselves (*e.g.*, on New Year's Eve, 1933, by Kube, Provincial President, *Gau* Leader, and founder of the " Faith Movement of German Christians "), though, of course, it is hotly denied should circumstances demand it. In the case of Hitler and those who believe in him, genuine belief, that is to say, a belief that controls the whole of a man in all his activities, has entered a stage in which many still profess their faith (in particular the Christian faith) and may even in all honesty bear witness to it, but they (and especially the educated upper classes) no longer understand it wholly and entirely. That is why the worldly Hitlerian movement always has the advantage over the Christian

creeds except where the whole genuine faith has come to life again and they triumph over the modern Julian the Apostate, even though it be their earthly ruin, their Cross, and their death.

For he, the Führer himself, is the real enemy of the Church, and when this fact is forgotten (as, unfortunately, it often is) it is merely self-deception, though possibly of propaganda value, to register " victories " over neo-paganism as represented by the German Faith Movement (led by Hauer and Reventlow), the Tannenberg League (Ludendorff), and other, still more unimportant groups, such as that of the importunate, noisy Dr. Dinter or that of the completely isolated, bombastic Professor Bergmann. An army is not really defeated by the repulse of a few robber-bands which have attached themselves to it (uninvited, for the most part), have been employed merely as reconnoitring patrols when the occasion offered, and have been rewarded for their services with nothing but contempt.

It is a fundamental misconception of the cultural-political situation in the Third Reich, very prevalent both in Germany and abroad, to imagine that a deadly warfare is being waged between the Churches and blatant paganism, and that the Government of the Reich, or the N.S.D.A.P., is deliberately supporting or furthering this paganism as such. The attitude of Rosenberg alone, who is not in league with Hauer and is definitely hostile to Reventlow and Ludendorff, shows that nothing could be further from the thoughts of the most active champions of the National Socialist *Weltanschauung* than direct

co-operation with those "honest but tactless"[1] people who openly attack Christianity. These people, whom Hitler treats with good-humoured nonchalance when it is merely a question of such effete causes as the "Free from Rome" movement but with murderous contempt and hatred when they molest his own adherents—these organized worshippers of German or Nordic deities have in actual fact even less personal influence in the Third Reich than the "Free Thinkers" had in the Republic. It is true, however, that as compared with the "Free Thinkers", they are granted greater latitude in the way of abuse by the officials and authorities and that their supporters are drawn from the semi-educated classes, whereas those of the out-of-date God-less party came almost entirely from the proletariat. Numerically, they are not so strong as the "Free Thinkers", a proportion of whom have taken refuge with them, especially in Central Germany, but without succeeding in allaying the suspicions of the National Socialist authorities, who have already dissolved several of their groups. It is quite possible that, as has been published recently in the Press, the whole of the Faith Movement led by Hauer and Reventlow, which since 1934 has been merely one sect among many—amounts to only 5,300 registered members. In any case, the demonstration at the Berlin Sportpalast, in April, 1935, with its audience running into tens of thousands, is no argument to the contrary for those who are aware of the agitated state of religious opinion

[1] An epithet used by Hitler in *Mein Kampf*.

throughout modern Germany, and the fact that motor-lorries were sent as far as the Rhineland to bring supporters to the meeting. We should have made no mention of the movement were it not to dissipate the limelight that has been directed on these ideologists with its consequent obscuring of the real danger.

It would be a fatal error to suppose that the complete suppression of this neo-pagan bogy—which could be effected at any moment—would mean a return to Christianity. On the contrary, it would only be a tactical move in the battle against Christianity. The toleration he has hitherto shown towards neo-paganism, as opposed to the passionate hostility with which the creeds have engaged the sole enemy which they have been allowed to call by its right name, provides the Führer with an ideal situation for making a gesture which would have a great psychological effect, were he to announce one day that he would no longer permit the open persecution of the Churches, basing his action on the principle of toleration, which, he would say, had suffered violation. He was evidently playing with this idea when, as was subsequently made known by Bishop Galen, he promised the bishops whom he received in audience on June 26th, 1934, that if an agreement were reached concerning the interpretation of the Concordat he would put a stop to the encouragement given to " neo-pagan propaganda ". It is quite possible that something similar is taking place, or has already done so, within the framework of Kerrl's " pacificatory measure ", if the voluntary

renunciation of open propaganda made by the German Faith Movement is any indication. Were the Christian publicists to be thus deprived at a single blow of their customary object of attack and to be forced to hail as the " modern Constantine " the man who had put an end to this new godlessness as he had already annihilated the Bolshevistic variety, it would be the greatest success that the open paganistic movement could have brought him, for were it possible for him to pose as the rescuer of " our Christian faith " and the conqueror of the spiritual " second Revolution ", the last obstacle to his cultural policy would be removed.

This policy, having no connection whatever with the German Faith Movement or other sects which unduly occupy public attention, is directed towards the German, or Third, Church. This is evident from the report issued by several newspapers (under the auspices of responsible Church authorities) of the instructional camp held by the National Socialist German Students' League in 1935, which is incomparably more important than all the reports of meetings and other publications dealing with the German Faith Movement.

We reproduce here a few passages from this report. " At the Party Congress in 1933 the Führer asserted that National Socialism is a world theory. This *Weltanschauung* has been welded together in Rosenberg's *Mythus des* 20. *Jahrhunderts* in anticipation of the coming . . . struggle for the German soul, and it corresponds with the thought and will of the Führer. The Führer, in an interview of seven hours

which he granted to the Reich Director of the Students' League, commissioned him to form the League into a shock troop for the inculcation of our *Weltanschauung*. At the present time there are three world theories in Germany: the Christian, the Marxist, and the National Socialist. Each rules out the others without the slightest hope of compromise. . . . Both the Christian and the Marxist, being individualistic, are consequently Liberalistic. The National Socialist *Weltanschauung* is suited only to the German race, not, like the Christian, to all races. Art. 24 of the Programme refers only to a positive religion. Since Christianity has been the religion prevalent in this country the word 'Christianity' was used for the sake of clearness. . . . A struggle with the creeds is bound to come—but not a struggle involving the use of force—they will die out without any need of that. We are not out against the hundred-and-one different kinds of Christianity, but Christianity itself. . . . Even those Christians who really want to serve the people—and there are such Christians—will have to be opposed. . . . The *rapporteur* explained continually that he was not voicing his own opinion but was representing the official attitude adopted by the Party and its Leader. [The *rapporteurs* appointed to training camps are themselves personally trained in another camp by leading members of the Party.] . . . A theological student and I asked permission to leave the camp. . . . The camp commandant saw our point of view but nevertheless tried to detain us. With regard to Art. 24 and similar statements

made by the Führer, he asked us whether we realized that the Führer had entrusted Rosenberg with the inculcation of the *Weltanschauung*. He cited a number of instances (the exclusion of theologians from the S.S., the secession from the Church of Hitler's bodyguard, and so on) which made it clear that the Führer was in wholehearted agreement with Rosenberg and his ideas. On our suggesting that Art. 24 with its 'positive Christianity' might be misleading, he told us that it was very often inadvisable to tell the truth to one who was seriously ill for fear of taking away from him the last vestiges of his will to live. The people were not yet ready for the new *Weltanschauung* and in its present state it would hardly survive a religious war. . . . Meanwhile the Reich Director of the Students' League had arrived. . . . To quote one sentence from his speech: 'For us National Socialists there is only one authority from whom we take our orders, even though they be directed against Rome and Wittenberg'. With regard to our case he informed us point-blank that the time was coming when many members of the Party would be surprised to find that they had been fighting for a new *Weltanschauung* when all along they thought that they had been fighting for a political cause, and they would have to make up their minds which side they intended to support. . . . Certain sections of the Evangelical Church had not yet noticed this, he added with a smile, obviously referring to the German Christians."

The goal is clear; the only question is whether

Hitler will try to reach it himself or whether in this sphere he will be content to fill the rôle of John the Baptist—a rôle which he once thought he would have to play in the political sphere.

In the latter case he might well console himself with a few passages from Paul de Lagarde's *Diagnose* (1874) :

> " The State had to foster and encourage everything that showed signs of producing a national life so as to be able, in its rôle of the faithful John the Baptist, to quit the field at the earliest possible moment and leave its superior, the Nation, in complete and absolute possession. . . . Once separated from the Church the State had no other function but to liberate the spiritual life of the Nation as much as possible, so as to render it perfectly capable of dealing with Catholicism unaided. . . . The conflict between the Church and the State cannot be concluded by means of compromise, either unilateral or mutual. It must be concluded once for all by a third party, the Nation, establishing its rights. . . . It is only the National Church that will never come in conflict with the Nation and will never be at variance with the State. . . . Romanism and Catholicism will not be abolished by force but by completely ignoring them . . . and superseding them by Religion. No good, but only harm, is done by passing laws that are aimed against them especially, for this only drives the disease inwards, impairing the internal, more refined organs. Romanism and

Catholicism will not be overcome in Germany by an abstract religion but by the National-German Religion. This religion is in conformity with the God-given nature of the German nation."

THE FIGHT FOR PROTESTANTISM

THE " GERMAN CHRISTIAN " SHOCK TROOPS

THE national Church, which can never come into conflict with the national State, for the simple reason that it invariably approves of and justifies the actions taken by the heads of the State, had every prospect of rapid development within the bosom of Protestantism, seeing that it was regarded by a large proportion of the population as the national creed. Luther, *qua* religious reformer, was merged into Luther the German to form one vague unity. If there was any resistance to be overcome it would be solely that of a " calcified Church leadership " which in its national development had stopped short at the old parties of the Right and had thus obviously failed to respond with sufficient alacrity to " the bidding of the age " or, to give it its " theological " form, " God's summons proclaimed through the historical situation ". No more attention was paid to the theological scholars and groups that opposed the *Bindestrich* Christianity that confused race and religion than to the Protestant Left groups ; as opponents they were negligible, but they might be made to serve a useful purpose as material for provocative propaganda (as in the case of Dehn).

The campaign against the ecclesiastical reactionaries was undertaken wholly and solely by the

National Socialist party without the aid of the *Bund für Deutsche Kirche* (German Church League), which had been formed in 1921 for the racial revival and de-judaizing of the Christian faith and had been represented in sundry Church parliaments. At Hitler's express desire, the campaign was not waged by a group of Protestant National Socialists with a political title, as was originally intended in a way we shall see immediately. The far more harmlessly and, what was still more to the point, religiously sounding name of " The Faith Movement of German Christians " (*Glaubensbewegung Deutscher Christen*, abbreviated to D.C.) was chosen as being more suitable, as was admitted in his first proclamatory publication by Dr. Wieneke, one of the movement's co-founders, whose public career, as a result of his blunder, came to an end forthwith.

According to popular belief the earliest document to be published by the leaders of this " movement " was their first real programme, the " main policy " of June 6th, 1932 (to be followed by so many other programmes), but in actual fact it was the ecclesiastico-political circular letter No. 1, issued by the N.S.D.A.P. *Gau* (district) of Silesia in February, 1932. The following extracts from it, including the italics, are taken from the *Christliche Welt* of 1932.

Directions regarding Ecclesiastical Affairs

" In the year 1932 will be held the Church elections for the Evangelical State Church of the Prussian Union. They are of the greatest import-

ance for the coming Third Reich. The *Reich Directorate* has given permission for candidates to be proposed as

Evangelical National Socialists

" The election campaign is to be directed by expert advisers on ecclesiastical affairs *co-operating with the local party leaders*. . . . The duty of these ecclesiastical experts will be to keep a *careful watch on parish organs*. All attacks on the N.S.D.A.P. are to be reported. . . .

" An electioneering pamphlet is now in preparation. Briefly, its principles are as follows : We ' Evangelical National Socialists ' are reconstructing our State Church on the foundations of a *positive Christianity* in the spirit of Martin Luther. Accordingly our aims are :

" 1. The rejection of the Liberal spirit of the Judaic-Marxist ' enlightenment '.

" 2. The overthrow of *humanitarianism born of the Judaic-Marxist spirit*, with its resultant pacificism, internationalism, *Christian world-citizenship*, etc.

" 3. The emphasizing of a militant faith *in the service* of our God-given German nationality.

" 4. The purification and preservation of the race. . . .

" 5. The suppression of anti-religious and anti-racial Marxism and its *Christian Socialist hangers-on of every description*.

" 6. The inculcation of a new spirit into our Church leaders, whether official or unofficial. . . .

" 7. The amalgamation of the petty Evangelical

State Churches into a strong Evangelical *National Church*. . . . The charge that we intend to turn the Church into a political organization is to be rebutted. *We are not acting as a party*, but as Evangelical Christians we are obeying a *divine summons* which we discern in our national movement. As faithful members of our Church we put forward the legitimate claim to receive due consideration in the life and *administration of the Church* as befits the greatness and the inward strength of National Socialism.

. . .

" It is the duty of every member of the Party to vote in the Church elections.

. . .

" It is not recommended that National Socialists vote for other Party candidates unless they are certain of gaining two-thirds of the seats in the various Church bodies.

" Heil Hitler !

" DR. SEIFERT,

Leader of the Cultural Section for the Gau of Silesia."

This priceless document, in which a party official, writing on official paper, sketches the outlines of a pamphlet in which it is declared : " We are not acting as a party but are obeying a divine summons ", and in which, at the same time, " faith " is regarded as unconcernedly as by Hitler as being " at the service of the nation ", incorporates a tactical error that was afterwards avoided. It is irrefutable evi-

ence that from the very outset the "German hristians" were nothing but a subsidiary party ganization posing before the public for expe- ency's sake as an independent body. As it ppened, this tool afterwards developed a separate istence that was not exactly to the liking of its riginator.

One wonders why the Party ever attempted the sk of capturing and compulsorily "bringing into ne" the Protestant Churches by means of its fficially appointed pastors, whose enthusiasm knew o bounds, but whose insufficient command of heological diction involved them in one scandal fter another. Everything would have gone quite smoothly had the simple fact been realized that the Church leaders as they then were would, in accordance with their whole mentality, have been duly impressed by the Party's political success and would ave placed themselves unconditionally at the service of the people and the National Socialist State, naturally within the limits of their traditional but no longer dangerous mode of expression. Only one explanation seems plausible to us: the Party was attracted by the ecclesiastical parliamentarianism in the Evangelical Churches. Might it not be as successful in the Church elections as in the political ones? A success at any election, municipal or ecclesiastical, would be still another proof of the Party's irresistible advance.

That these hopes were justified is demonstrated by the successes gained by the first National Socialist candidates at the Church elections. The electors

were strongly impressed by the party that represent
a " positive Christianity ", and indeed at that ti
it did seem to be steering a wholly ecclesiasti
course. In 1932 Röhm, the same S.A. chief
staff [1] who on May 12th, 1934, forbade his S.A.
take part in Church politics, gave orders that
S.A. chaplain, who must be a member of the Part
was to be appointed, with the rank of *Sturmban*
führer, to every " group " headquarters (*Christlic*
Welt, December 3rd, 1932). At that time there we
not yet issued official party documents setting fort
the impossibility of combining membership of th
Party or the S.A. with the holding of an ecclesiastica
office. These came in 1935, an example being th
decision given on January 17th by the *Reichsstatt-*
halter (State Governor) Wagner to the Baden
Council of Brethren (*Lutherische Kirche*, No. 17, p. 82).
Nor at that time had Hitler's bodyguard, high
officials in the Thuringian *Hitler-Jugend*, and
Landeshauptmann left the Church, as they had by
1935.

In the elections held in Württemberg, a strictly
Church-going State, in March, 1931, there was as
yet no question of National Socialist participation.
Almost simultaneously, however, in Liberalized
Nassau, the " National Christian League ", called
into existence by Dean Lehr-Gladenbach, succeeded
at its first attempt in capturing 14 of the 60 seats in
the Synod, *i.e.*, more than 23 per cent., at a time
when the National Socialists held a bare 19 per cent.

[1] S.A. = *Sturmabteilung*, "Storm Section" one of the Nazi organizations.

the seats in the Reichstag, and this in spite of the eich leaders having countermanded the order to te issued by the Wiesbaden *Kreis*[1] authorities. the re-election of the Protestant State Synod in den, which was held on July 10th, 1932, an Association for the Promotion of Positive Chris- anity and Germanism" (this being the title ssumed by the National Socialists in Baden) secured 3 seats out of the 57, at the expense both of the iberals and the Positives. Moreover, for this ection, Hitler had nominated as the competent arty authority, not the Nationalist Socialist League f Pastors (*Pfarrerbund*), which had been in existence r some months, but the political *Gau* leader.

The success obtained in Nassau led the Party to expect a still more favourable result from the Prussian Church elections which had been fixed r the autumn of 1932. At Hitler's personal tervention the title of "Evangelical National Socialists" was dropped as being too politically-sounding. Even before the Baden elections, on July 6th, there was formed, under the leadership of Kube, then the leader of the Prussian National Socialist "fraction" and now the Oberpräsident of Brandenburg, the so-called "Faith Movement of German Christians", whose "self-given" "main lines of policy" were certainly more carefully formulated than the principles incorporated in the already cited circular letter of February, 1932.

But, except for their express rejection of the mission to convert the Jews and their admonition

[1] *Kreis*, lit. "circle", in this case an administrative district.

against the softening of the people by the excessi exercise of charity, the " Faith Movement's " t articles contained little that was new as compar with the circular letter. The fundamental princi was supposed to be expressed in Article 4 : " V take our stand on the ground of a positive Chr tianity. We confess to an active Christian faith fitt to our race, in conformity with the German Luthera spirit and heroic piety." In his semi-official expo tion Dr. Wieneke explains what this " positiv Christianity " is. It rises superior to the confli within the Protestant body between the positive orthodox party, with its strict adherence to the creed and the Liberals, with their individualistic freedo of conscience. Wieneke satisfies the orthodox with " Our object is to give expression to the inviolability of the fundamental tenets of our creed " and the Liberals with " but our movement allows ever adherent complete Evangelical freedom with regar to ecclesiastical dogma."

Admittedly these were the right tactics to adopt in order to enfold within the new " Faith Movement" both the " positive " and the " Liberal " elements of Hitler's Protestant supporters. Nevertheless, at the Prussian Church elections the movement did not meet with the success that had been anticipated, for whereas far more than half of the Protestant population voted for the National Socialists at the political elections, they gained only about a third of the total number of seats in the parish councils (in Berlin, 2,282 out of 7,538). On the whole, they were more successful in the east of Germany than

the west. The reason for this comparative lure was not only that the Church elections were ld at a time when the Party was suffering a certain back (in mid-November, 1932), but probably ore because there were many among the Party's litical supporters who, while fully endorsing its position to the " System ", objected to the Church ing used as a political instrument.

But for most of them the situation, that is to say, eir attitude towards the " German Christians ", anged as soon as the N.S.D.A.P. came into power, r all those who had come to manhood before the ar were accustomed to regard the unconditional bjection of the Evangelical Church to a Nationalist overnment as its transformation into a political arty. " Only he who opposes is a politician. He who obeys is simply a patriot." This attitude ad not been affected in the slightest by the Republican regime ; the Church still sided with the Nationalists, who had gone into " Opposition " but who were naturally fitted to govern. Wherefore here began in the spring of 1933 the stupendous rise of the " German Christians " which reached its visible zenith in the Church elections of July 23rd. On this occasion they captured 51–100 per cent. of the total number of seats in the Evangelical parish councils, with the exception of the Bavarian and Westphalian synods, though it must be remembered that the elections were held under abnormal conditions : in many places there was only one list of candidates offering themselves for election, that of the " German Christians ".

The elections were preceded by a propagan campaign that lasted several months. It w launched at the first general meeting of the " Germ Christians " on April 3rd–5th, 1933, the Minist Göring and Frick being members of the honor committee. It was on this occasion that Ku speaking as the leader of the Prussian Nation Socialist fraction, declared that it would " mal ruthless use of the public funds that stood at disposal and the agreement that had been ma with the Church regarding the appointment of dignitaries, to ensure that the change that had tak place in the will of our people should make its felt in the ecclesiastical as well as in the politic sphere ". It was then, too, that Dr. Werner, lawyer, afterwards Minister for Church Affairs proclaimed for the first time the Church's " guidin principle " and demanded the " co-ordination State and Church ". And Pastor Hossenfelder, t Reich leader of the movement, announced i " Biblical " language : " God said, Let there be a people, and there was a people. Wherewith faith was given a new meaning. It is from the peopl that the faith of modern times derives its tru meaning." A resolution was passed proclaimin " the right of the Revolution . . . with respec to a Church official who withholds his uncon ditional recognition of the national rising. . . The State that is led by Adolf Hitler calls to the Church to follow it ; the Church must answer the call ".

One month later, on May 6th, the " German

ristians" handed Kapler, the President of the urch League, what may be described as a ogramme of action. It contained a demand that ceeded all previous ones: the appointment of a Lutheran Reich bishop" (and a Reformed Reich car). Noteworthy also is the declaration: "The vangelical Reich Church is the Church of the erman Christians, *i.e.*, the Christians of Aryan ce". And last but not least, there was the mand for preliminary elections of ecclesiastical ectors. For all this there was not the slightest undation in law. Even the Chancellor had given is solemn promise hardly more than a month efore: "There will be no encroachment on he rights of the Churches. Their relations with he State will remain as heretofore". Accordingly new method of procedure had to be adopted; it oved successful and has done so ever since. henever an instrument of Hitler's exposed himself oo glaringly he was not as a rule removed entirely, ut subordinated to a new instrument, supposedly eutral or desirous of uniting all "Parties" in the common interest of the Church, and those who were anxious to deceive themselves fondly hoped that he would "set things to rights". On this occasion it was Ludwig Müller, chaplain to the Königsberg *Wehrkreis* and, as it gradually leaked out, the East Prussian State leader of the German Christians, who, on a complaint being lodged by Kapler, the President of the Church League, about State interference with the Mecklenburg Church, was appointed (and up to now, November, 1935, not recalled) by Hitler

to be " his adviser and plenipotentiary for Eva gelical Church affairs ". " In addition, his spec duty will be to encourage every work that has for object the creation of an Evangelical German Rei Church. Signed, Adolf Hitler ". Müller, by w of further explanation of his appointment, stated " My task is to see that the struggle that is to deci the future of the Evangelical Church is not conducte in the same way as the political struggle." At th same time he remained the leader of the " Germa Christians " in East Prussia.

Hitler's outspoken patronage evoked a strea of assistants anxious to give the badly christene movement at least the necessary anointing, and it wa found possible to lay before the public, on May 16th 1933, the " new lines of policy " of the Germa Christians (without the explicit withdrawal of the old for what was the sense of being too punctilious ? They bore the signatures of Müller, who had just be chosen as the patron of the " German Christians " (which choice had been confirmed by Hitler), of thei old Reich leader Hossenfelder, of Fezer, professor o theology at Tübingen, and of the Berlin Missions inspektor Weichert. The trained theologians had seen to it that there was no open heresy (such as the denial of the mission to the Jews, the Aryan Church, a " racially appropriate " creed) in the formulas in- tended for public perusal. There being no desire to incur the charge of being a State-controlled form of Christianity, a show was made, in words that sounded well in the ears of the National Socialists, of being averse to such a project : " The new State requires

ıe Church, not as a pliant tool, but because it knows here to look for the roots of a people."

These lines of policy, which, needless to say, had ɔt the slightest effect on the movement in actual ractice, were the means of acquiring the support f further ecclesiastical circles, whose ineffectiveness typified by the case of Dr. Rust, Professor of Theology at Königsberg. A year later he made the ɔllowing declaration :

" I joined the German Christians in June, 1933, for three reasons :

" Firstly, because they represented themselves to be that section of the Church, which, unlike the other, welcomed the new State by reason of their Evangelical faith.

" Secondly, because in this part of the country they claimed to be conducting a new revitalizing movement in which once again one read, and listened to, the word of God, and prayed, in common.

" Thirdly, because the movement professed to be of such a character as to attract the masses which thitherto had been given up to godless Marxism and to incorporate them in the new Church.

" But, firstly, my repeatedly expressed desire to see and speak to the aforesaid masses could not be complied with owing to their non-existence.

" Secondly, it became ever clearer to me with the course of time that the German Christians were in fundamental disagreement with the

teaching of Holy Writ and the tenets of the Church and

"Thirdly, that they intended to reform the Church on principles that were foreign to it.

"Wherefore I parted from them in January 1934."

By the time this worthy man, and several others not so innocuous as he, had left the German Christians, "bitterly disappointed", they had long since done their duty by them. They had procured for them an absolute majority which would enable them to reform the Church according to their lights. The irony of it was that these elections which meant the disintegration of the Church marked the climax of pacificatory proceedings conducted by Reichsminister Frick, which were initiated in response to a communication from President Hindenburg expressing his solicitude about the future of the Church.

Hitler and the deputy leader of the Party, Rudolf Hess, played no small part in ensuring the success of the German Christians at the poll. By an order issued on July 20th Hess made it the duty of everyone who adhered to the National Socialist *Weltanschauung* to vote in the Church elections and thus made sure of the votes of many of the German Christians who took no interest in Church affairs. On the eve of the poll the Chancellor himself broadcast the following message to all stations :

"In expressing to you my desire regarding the Evangelical Church elections I am acting simply

and solely as your political leader, preserving a totally unbiassed attitude towards matters of creed, dogma, or doctrine—matters of purely ecclesiastical import. But over and above these things there are problems that leave the politician and the responsible leader of a people no alternative but publicly to define his position regarding them. . . . National Socialism has continually assured you that it is fully determined to afford the protection of the State to the Christian Churches. . . . Conversely, however, the State must require of the Churches that they in their turn give it the support of which it is in need. . . . The determining factor of both *the Church's* and the State's *right to existence* is the *preservation of man's* spiritual and corporal *well-being*. [Our italics.] The ideal of unifying the Evangelical State Churches and *creeds* [!] is now nearing its realization, and it is a sheer historical fact that cannot be disputed by means of insincere or frivolous objections that this is due to the political revolution of the people and to the movement *within the Evangelical creeds* [*cf.* Circular Letter No. 1 !] which clearly and unambiguously recognized this national and popular movement at a time when, unfortunately, *just as in the Roman Church* [!], numerous pastors and superintendents opposed the national rising in the most bitter, even fanatical, manner, and this *without the slightest cause*. Having at heart the revival of the German nation, I naturally desire that the result of these new Church elections will support us in the execution of our new national

and State policy. . . . But this will not b vouchsafed by petrified religious forces that hav turned their backs on the world and reckon moder phenomena and events as of no account, but b the forces of a living movement. *I see these force marshalled most conspicuously in that portion of th Evangelical community which, by joining the Germa Christians, has set foot on the sure ground of the National Socialist State*—not in a spirit of enforced endurance but with active approval. This body does not concern itself with the religious questions that are disputed within the various creeds, and it is no part of my duty to define my position in their regard."

After these elections, which had apparently delivered the Evangelical Church into the hands of the German Christians, cleared the way for Ludwig Müller's entry into his office of *Reichsbischof*, and procured episcopal sees for other leaders of the German Christians, Alfred Rosenberg announced in the *Völkischer Beobachter* of August 16th that " the country has now entered a stage of affairs in which National Socialism cannot lend its political support to any of the groups of Churches. . . . Consequently neither the forces of the State nor party influence is any longer at the disposal of the various denominations for the settlement of their spiritual or intellectual differences." And on October 13th Hess, the Führer's deputy, issued the famous toleration enactment which, referring directly to a corresponding announcement by Reichsbischof

Müller, by which no pastor was to suffer for not belonging to the German Christians, ran as follows : " No National Socialist is to suffer in any way whatsoever for not subscribing to some particular mode of belief or creed or for not subscribing to any creed at all." It was thought that the Evangelical Church had been captured by means of the German Christians and that " moral compulsion ", as Hess called it, would no longer be necessary, at any rate in the religious sphere.

One month later the great illusion was at an end. On November 13th, 1933, at the Berlin Sportpalast, was held the general assembly of the German Christians which has now become an event of historical importance. The chief speaker, Dr. Krause, a German Christian " *Gauobmann* ", made use of certain arguments which evoked no opposition from a single one of the hundred odd clerics who were present, many of whom were highly-placed leaders of the German Christian movement, but which the patron of the movement, Reichsbischof Müller, who was informed of the speech, not by any of the German Christian listeners but by Pastors Niemöller and Jakobi, felt compelled to condemn in the following terms : " The speaker attacked the Old Testament in an outrageously provocative manner, and even the New Testament was subjected to criticism totally incompatible with the teaching of the Church. This is tantamount to denying the Bible as the Church's sole and immovable foundation. Further, the speaker put forward views implying the rejection of the Reformed doctrine of

justification by faith alone and evoking a conception of Jesus that harks back to the long-forgotten days of Liberalism. Report has it—though this is hardly credible—that even the Crucifix was rejected."

Actually, Krause had not gone so far as that. He had stopped short at reproducing Rosenberg's theories concerning Jesus as an heroic figure : " We must be on our guard against a too lofty conception of the Crucified. We need for our guidance not a God enthroned in the distant heights but a fearless fighter. . . ." The " honest but tactless " cleric (to quote the phrase from Hitler's book) was justifiably indignant at being deprived of his ecclesiastical offices as a result of his speech. On entering into them he had not been asked to take an oath as to his religious beliefs, and what had he done but to express outright what all these National Socialist " Christians " either believed already or were prepared to believe ? This, he contended, was proved by the unanimous applause of his twenty thousand listeners and the passing of a resolution (against a minority of one) embodying all his arguments.

The demonstration at the Sportpalast involved the German Christians in a crisis which nearly proved fatal to them. First they lost on the Right wing all those who had been deluded by the veil of the " new main lines of policy " woven for them by skilled theological hands. We need mention here only the theological professors Fezer, who had conducted the election of the Reichsbischof, and Gogarten, whose connection with the German Christians had made it appear that dialectical

theology was on their side, in spite of Karl Barth's open rupture with him. Then there were hundreds of pastors in southern and western Germany who deserted, some of them *en masse*, as in Bavaria and in the Untergau Wuppertal in Westphalia. And even all those on the Left wing of the movement who were genuinely radical were disheartened at the abandonment of Krause, who, with a few followers, proceeded to inaugurate a popular Church movement that never acquired any real importance.

Most momentous of all, however, was the abandonment of the Faith Movement by the " Landsgemeinde Thüringen " in the course of the crisis, and the founding, on December 9th, 1933, of its own " Church Movement of German Christians e. V.[1] (National Church Movement) ", with the watchword, " One People, One God, One Reich, One Church ! " Its intention was gradually to attract within its ranks from every part of the Reich all who were seriously in favour of a national Church but disagreed with Krause and other believers in Germanism pure and simple in their total abandonment of the Old Testament ; they still believed in it as an " example of the divine formation of a people ".

Fundamentally, it was the heritage of the German Churchmen (to whom Krause originally belonged) that was cherished by the " Left ", Radical wing of the German Christians and has continued ever since to break out into such manifestations as the deletion of Hebraic words (Alleluia, Amen, etc.) in prayer-books and hymn-books, the opposing of such

[1] e. V. = *eingetragener Verein* (registered society).

titles as " Zion " and, recently, " King of the Jews " as applied to Christ on the Cross.

In fact the rank and file of the German Christians could make nothing of more subtle ideologies such as that of Emanuel Hirsch, professor of theology at Göttingen, which had been accepted by Karl Barth as subjects for philosophical, if not theological, discussion—ideologies in which the National Socialist revolution was treated as " Kairos " [1], as a divine message to the German people which, though not of a Messianic character, nevertheless indicated its salvation. This kind of ideology demonstrates the hopeless isolation of the old-style intellectuals, no matter with how much enthusiasm and approval they might interpret events. The case of Hirsch was not exceptional ; it was typical of the state of mind that was seen repeatedly even in such a nationalistic writer as Stapel and in the intellectualist members of the " *Arbeitsgemeinschaft katholischer Deutscher* " (Labour Community of Catholic Germans), which aimed at co-operation with National Socialism. In spite of all their National Socialistic zeal they felt that they belonged to what Hirsch called " a transitional generation that has to express new thoughts in terms encumbered with past history." Hirsch openly complained that " approval has been given to a social order as an essential part of the new political order, without a clear appreciation of the situation. The emergency has been exaggerated, with the result that the theological

[1] A Greek word meaning ' the right time ', ' the fulness of time ', in the prophetic sense.

ıstification of one's actions has been omitted, and ne's [*i.e.*, Hossenfelder's and those of his persuasion] hristian and ecclesiastical motives have been ısufficiently explained to one's friends ". Professor Hirsch was only too willing to explain *his* motives, ut he was given only one short-lived opportunity o do so, when he was called in as theological dviser to Ludwig Müller in the summer of 1933.

His services were not required again in the late utumn, probably because his exorcizing charisma vas suspect in view of the " misgiving of the hundreds of thousands of silent members of the parishes ". It was anent this " misgiving " that the following passage appeared in *The Gospel in the Third Reich* (No. 49), the organ of the German Christians : " A satanic force, destitute of the slightest trace of Christian charity, moves these opponents of the Faith Movement to turn everything, not to a good, but to a deliberately evil, use ".

But, instead of " explaining their own motives ", which would have been bound to lead eventually to the complete and final dissolution of the movement into German Churchmen and a handful of " *Bindestrich* " theologians, a policy of repeated camouflage was preferred. Firstly, Ludwig Müller, in sore distress, felt obliged to relinquish his position as patron of the German C ıristians ; then the name of " Faith Movement " w_s abolished and reference was made only to " German Christians " as " National Socialists of the Evangelical Church ". At the same time, however, Hossenfelder, who had been elected Reich leader of the movement for life

and, according to the statutes, could not be removed was compelled to retire and relieve himself of a his ecclesiastical duties for two years (which wi soon have elapsed). He wrote in a parting lette to his associates : " You and I have now performe the task that was first entrusted to me by the Part leaders at Munich, that of superintending th Church elections in Germany . . . you know tha I have always given my decisions with a sense o responsibility to the Third Reich and the Churc of this Reich. [Note the order : first the Reich then the Church.] My action is taken with a view to ensuring unity and striking power and to crushing the insolent forces of reaction. . . . Heil Hitler ! " Hossenfelder's successor was Dr. jur. Kinder, vice-president of the State Church office at Kiel and German Christian *Gau* leader, who was granted special leave of absence for the purpose. During the eighteen months of his leadership the German Christians had really only one function to perform : to remain in existence, so as to enable the " bishops " and other " Church leaders " who had risen from their ranks to appeal to the German Christian masses (still amounting to 600,000 in the middle of 1934, according to their own computation) whom they represented. Similarly the new " 28 Theses of the German Christians ", which were formulated by the newly-appointed Consistorial Councillor Grundmann on the instructions of the particularly ardent Saxon " German Christian " bishop Coch were pronounced by Kinder to be binding on the whole movement, and were forced on all the State

nurches under its control, only served to give it a perficial *cachet* of Christianity. Professor R. See-rg, speaking in the name of a section of the cological faculty of Berlin, adjudged that " they ere an attempt to formulate the basic truths of hristianity to meet the needs of the National ocialist movement ". This rather curious pro-ouncement was followed by the acknowledgement hat they were intended " to apply the Gospel in its riginal force to our modern ways of thinking and eling ". The Lutheran theological faculty at eipzig, however, after giving a considered opinion n the subject, came to the conclusion that " on everal important points the 28 theses conflict not nly with the text but also with the spirit of the Confessions ".[1] Meanwhile, most of the State Churches which had accepted them at first, after-wards renounced them, with the result that they have sunk into oblivion more or less unhonoured and unsung. It would be difficult to say whether hey are still binding on the German Christians themselves, seeing that in the meantime Reich Leader Kinder, who declared them to be binding, has also retired " in order to devote himself exclu-sively to his former vocation of Consistorial Coun-cillor at Kiel ". This was preceded by fierce disputes with " Bishop " (on half pay) Hossenfelder who was attempting to rally round him the veterans of the movement which he had fostered in its first beginnings. At length he was prohibited by a legal

[1] *i.e.*, the Augsburg Confession, Luther's two Catechisms, the Articles of Schmalkalden, etc.

decision issued on April 25th, 1935, from describi himself " as the director of the registered socie known as the ' German Christians ' and from maki announcements in the name of this society on t plea of being their director ". (*Lutherische Kirc* 1935, p. 168.) In the early summer of 1935 the followed negotiations with the National Churc German Christians of Thuringia which, accordir to an announcement made by them, led to th conclusion of an agreement on July 13th. By th agreement Dr. Kinder is said to have undertake to place his movement within the space of thr months under the directorship of the Thuringia leader Siegfried Leffler, whose motto was " A All-German Christian community " (*alias* " Nationa Church "). However, instead of fulfilling thi agreement, Dr. Kinder, for reasons not yet known had himself replaced as Reich leader by his deputy Studienrat (Educational Councillor) Rehm, th leader of the German Christians in Württemberg So that there are now at least two parallel Germa Christian movements, neither of which will pre sumably be of much importance as long as the new policy of " Church Pacification " is adhered to.

We cannot, however, take our leave of the Germa Christians without referring to the scene that tool place on January 8th, 1935, at the burial at Mönchs roth of the pastor Brunnacker, who had died by his own hand. Disciplinary proceedings had been initiated against him on November 27th of the previous year by the Bavarian Lutheran Church authorities " for being under the well-founded

spicion of having laid information against a mber of his colleagues". As he acknowledged at he had done wrong, and apologized to Bishop eiser, his deprivation of office was converted by the ate Church Council into sick leave, and he was informed that on regaining his health he would be given nother pastoral office. Nevertheless he took the atter so much to heart that he committed suicide—pposedly, according to the medical evidence, hen not in complete possession of his faculties.

At the graveside appeared Reichsbischof Müller, ho declared that he must "call the Almighty to itness the mendacity with which this contest is arried on. . . . Our brother here has been crushed ut of existence as a result of this mendacity. . . . You are *the first* man in Germany to have lost your ife in the contest".

Dr. Kinder spoke to the same effect in laying a wreath on the grave. And the former Franconian aster Meyer, appointed to the chair of Practical heology at Jena, declared: "Brunnacker was ounded to death on account of his fidelity. . . . What has happened here is murder, and one day the guilty parties, the murderers, will have to answer for it. We have here the first man to die for the Church. We have our martyr!" Herr Holz, the deputy Franconian *Gau* leader, a friend of Julius Streicher's, and chief editor of the *Stürmer*, gave this opinion of the suicide: "He was no less true to his faith than the others, but he was hunted down, hunted to death, because he loved his Leader". The funeral obsequies, which lasted two and a half

hours, terminated in a speech by Burgomast
Dr. Münch, whose hopes were thus expressed
" Please God, the day of reckoning will come f
those who murdered him ! "

This scene, which is almost unique in Chur
history, we have described comparatively ful
(basing our description on the report given in th
Lutherische Kirche of 1935, pp. 42 *seq.*) because w
know of no other in which the " German Christian
spirit is revealed so unmistakably. This, then, is th
" movement " commissioned by Hitler to revive th
Protestant Church and vigorously supported by hi
for that purpose ; which received the tacit approv
of Kerrl, the Reichsminister for Church Affairs, wh
placed at its disposal four of the eight seats on th
committee appointed by him to rule the Church
and which has supplied the majority of those wh
even now still continue to bear the title of " bishop "
in the German Evangelical Church.

THE OBJECTIVE : THE CHURCH GOVERNMENTS

At the time when Hitler came to power there wa
not a single leading personality in the Protestan
Churches who would have kept aloof from th
N.S.D.A.P. The Bavarian Church President, Dr
Veit, had issued a warning against the neo-paga
tendencies in the popular movement, but on being
violently attacked for doing so—the *Stürmer*, fo
instance, made inquiries about his parentage—h
definitely asserted that he had had no particula
party in his mind and that he had no objection on
principle to the " popular movement " to which he

ıd referred. Nevertheless, even before Hitler ized the supreme authority, he was succeeded in e government of the Bavarian State Church by e State Bishop, Dr. Meiser.

On the other hand, there was no lack of " Church aders " who more or less openly approved of the Iational Socialist movement. Perhaps the most utspoken was Professor Dr. Rendtorff, the State ishop of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. He made this atement, for instance, on April 3rd, 1931 : " For ıe sake of its vocation, the Evangelical Church ıust hearken to the great longing of the National ocialist movement and welcome it with gratitude " *Christliche Welt*, 1931).

And yet the first to be attacked and finally dislodged by National Socialists were Rendtorff and Dr. Otto Dibelius, the General Superintendent of he Mark of Brandenburg, who, as late as March 21st, 1933, had preached in honour of the " National Government " at the solemn celebration in the Garrison Church in Potsdam. Dibelius was forced to retire on July 24th, Rendtorff on August 11th. The former's offence was the writing of a *confidential* pastoral letter on March 3rd in which he had arraigned the humanistic ideology of National Socialism before the tribunal of the Gospel.

This is probably the best possible proof that from he very beginning, and on both sides, the fight for ıe Church governments was fought primarily for the capture of offices, not for the sake of principles. It began as a " fight for quotas ", *i.e.*, a fight for the percentage of the available posts which their holders

were expected to hand over to the besieging arm of German Christian candidates. It would therefo be irrelevant to a survey of the struggle for t *Church* itself to enter too closely into the vario conflicts that were waged in the twenty-eight Sta Churches with the object of gaining *power* in th Church, however typical and dramatic many of thes incidents were. We confine ourselves to mentionin the career of Dr. (*rerum politicarum*) Oberheid, wh after failing in business, resumed his study theology which had been interrupted by the Wa passed the first examination with assistance, faile in the second, passed it " with flying colours " afte his Führer had seized the reins of government between the spring and autumn of 1933 successivel administered a pastoral office, played a great rôl in the Koblenz Consistory, and was the Leader o his S.A. *Sturm*, was appointed Bishop of Cologne an Aachen on October 5th, " Chief of Staff " (subse- quently " Vicar ") to the Reichsbischof on March 7th, 1934, relieved of this office so soon afterwards as June 15th, and has thenceforward belonged to the directorate of the Thuringian National Church German Christians. And that of the " State Bishop " of Brunswick, Meyer famous for his funeral oration in which occurre the phrase : " There is a Valhalla for those who died for the Third Reich ". After being solemnly inducted by Müller on January 21st, 1934, he ha to be persuaded to resign his office exactly one month later, having survived the charge of embezzle- ment and fraud solely through " lack of evidence ".

hereas a co-defendant was sentenced for being an :complice in the same crime.

Perhaps the best indication of the policy under- ing this conduct is to be found in the reasons given y Freiherr von Pechmann, Doctor of Divinity, for aving the German Evangelical Church Assembly nd Board on May 2nd, 1933. Dr. Pechmann had een the President of the Assembly for many years, nd his subsequent secession from the Church (on pril 2nd, 1934) caused a great sensation.

"In contradistinction to the first Revolution hat of 1918], there is no excuse, and certainly no ufficient grounds, for altering the constitution of the Church. . . . At the present time the Church is in he fortunate position of being in no need what- ver, for internal causes, of having its constitution ltered." But should there be pressure from out- ide, either directly or on the part of politically ealous pastors, "then the Church cannot and must not make the slightest concession if it wants o *remain a Church*, if it does not want to run the risk of being faithless to its mission and of being unfitted to perform it."

Instead of maintaining a purely ecclesiastical attitude, the "Church leaders" began that dangerous game that prepared the ground for the three great waves of totalitarianization which swept across the Evangelical Churches in the summers of 1933, 1934, and 1935, and, at any rate so far as the Official Evangelical Churches are concerned, have, for all practical purposes, put them completely under the control of the State.

It was the President of the German Evangelic Church League himself, Dr. Kapler, who announce on April 23rd, 1933, less than a month after t Reich Assembly of the German Christians : " T situation demands the immediate reform of t constitution of German Protestantism ". He the instructed Dr. Marahrens, the Lutheran Stat Bishop of Hanover, and Dr. Hesse, a Reforme pastor of Elberfeld, to co-operate with—Ludwi Müller, the Reich Chancellor's plenipotentiary, t prepare plans for the creation of the " *Federa* German Evangelical Church ", which, in his opinio the situation demanded. As early as May 26th h saw to it that the plans for the constitution, whic had been drawn up in all haste at Lokkum, were passed unanimously by the plenipotentiaries of all the State Churches. Rendtorff's proposal, that the newly created office of " Reichsbischof " (for which there was no traditional precedent) be entrusted to Adolf Hitler's confidential assistant, was defeated by 55 votes to 31 (Kapler alone, as the representative of the Old Prussian Union, held 17 votes out of the total of 91) ; eleven Churches voted for Müller as " Reibi ",[1] as he was shortly to be called, thirteen against. The meeting then voted on Bodelschwingh's candidature, which was rejected by 52 votes to 28 (eleven Churches for, eight against) ; but at the final voting on May 27th only three Churches opposed the pious pastor, namely Württemberg (represented by Wurm), Mecklenburg-Schweri (Rendtorff), and Hamburg (Schöffel). *Habemus*

[1] Short for *Reichsbischof*.

piscopum ! rejoiced the " faithful " ; Kapler hastily retired (on May 8th). After us the deluge !

The Führer and the German Christians were not disposed to tolerate what they considered to be the ricking of Ludwig Müller. The propaganda machinery was set in motion, and by June 24th Rust, the Prussian Minister of Learning and Education, avowing that " the existing [he should have said ' created '] state of confusion must be ended ", appointed as State Commissioner for the area covered by all the Evangelical State Churches in Prussia, the Wiesbaden Provincial Court Councillor Jäger, who had just been promoted to the head of the ecclesiastical department of the Ministry. Jäger will go down in history as the man who in one of his proclamations uttered the famous phrase : " The phenomenon of Jesus is at bottom a characteristic Nordic ebullition ". He evidently knew his Rosenberg.

This interference with the Church, perpetrated without the slightest regard for legality, aroused indignant protests, but cowed the " Church leaders " to the extent of recognizing the Church elections, which had no legal authority either for their being held or for the way in which they were held, and which hitherto they had absolutely condemned. In return they were conceded a " Reich Church Constitution " (dated July 11th, 1933, and broadly based on the Lokkum plan), in whose legal strength, apparently owing to its being confirmed by a Reich law on July 14th, they placed more confidence than in that of their former constitution, which Hitler

had guaranteed on March 23rd and had allowed to be shattered on June 24th. The new constitution was signed by State Commissioner Jäger, whose measures they had just declared to be invalid, and by Müller, to whom Jäger had entrusted the directorship of the Church of the Old Prussian Union. And at the "National Synod" held at Wittenberg on September 27th, all those who had not been swept away by the storm that followed the July elections voted in a body for Ludwig Müller as Reichsbischof, and he, protests notwithstanding, chose Hossenfelder and Werner as his chief assistants. The first totalitarianizing wave delivered into the hands of the National Socialist party organization of the German Christians the control of all the State Churches (except those of Hanover, Württemberg, Bavaria, and, even then, Hamburg) and the absolute supremacy in the Reich Church Government.

The *Sportpalast* scandal altered the situation in that it became the starting-point of a powerful movement among the really Christian members of the Evangelical layfolk, who had gradually suspected and were now convinced that foxes had been set to mind the sheep. This popular movement, which grew from week to week, together with Müller's failure to form a stable Ministry for Church Affairs in accordance with the constitution, gave the non-"German Christian" Church leaders the courage and the excuse for sending the Chancellor of the Reich a memorandum in which they demanded the resignation of Reichsbischof Ludwig Müller whom

hey had unanimously elected after several months' experience of his methods. Hitler replied : " If his dispute goes on much longer, I shall have to leave the Church to its own devices ; and that will mean that the State subsidies and all other forms of support and encouragement will be withdrawn ". (*Reformiertes Wochenblatt*, 1934, No. 12). Müller made various promises, and the " Church leaders " put their names to the following *communiqué* : " Strongly impressed by the meeting they have just had with the Chancellor of the Reich, the Church leaders of the German Evangelical Church unanimously affirm their unconditional loyalty to the Third Reich and its Leader. . . . The assembled Church leaders are solidly in support of the Reichsbischof. . . . " Nevertheless, no sooner were they out of range than they again showed a lack of confidence in Ludwig Müller.

The German Christians' *Bible in the Third Reich* was cock-a-hoop. " It is wonderful what a word from Hitler can accomplish. The *communiqué* proves that current rumours are unfounded and that the opposition to the Reichsbischof was in no way due to misgivings of a religious nature, for no one would be so insulting as to suggest that the Church leaders would set aside their religious misgivings at the mere bidding of the State. . . . "

Müller thought that the Church leaders could stand some more of the same treatment that they had had before. On August 9th, 1934, with a complete disregard for the Church constitution of July, 1933, he had a series of " laws " passed by a

packed second " National Synod " which practically turned the constitution upside down and placed the State Churches under the immediate supervision of the Reichsbischof. The instigator of this measure, which was preceded by the " voluntary incorporation " of all the State Churches administered by the German Christians, was ex-State Commissioner Jäger, who since April 12th, 1934, had been acting simultaneously as " legal administrator " to the Reichsbischof, chief official for Evangelical affairs in the Reich directorate of the N.S.D.A.P., and *Ministerialdirektor* in the ecclesiastical department of the Prussian Ministry of Learning and Education. After effecting the more or less " voluntary " incorporation of all the other Churches, he set out in September forcibly to incorporate those of Württemberg and Bavaria. The second wave was at its height, but it broke on the rock-like resistance of the truly Christian laity.

On September 11th the two South German bishops were informed by the Presidential Chancellery that after a thorough investigation of their complaint (that illegal forcible measures had been taken by the Reich Church Administration at the instigation of the Führer and Reich Chancellor) it had been found that " your allegation that the measures taken by the Government of the Reich to incorporate the State Churches are contrary to the constitution and the law is unfounded ". As late as September 23rd Müller was solemnly inducted into his office of Reichsbischof in Berlin Cathedral in the presence of the Minister for the

Interior, Dr. Frick. But his reception by the Führer which had been announced in the Press did not take place, and a few weeks later all the measures for compulsory totalitarianization in Württemberg, Bavaria, and Hanover were cancelled. Jäger resigned all his posts, one after the other, and one after the other the State Churches that had been "voluntarily" incorporated discovered that in point of law they were still independent within the framework of the constitution of 1933.

The second wave of compulsory totalitarianization was not so successful as the first, for several reasons: it lacked the element of surprise; the really vital part of the contest was concentrated in those parts of Protestant Germany which were most attached to the Church; the events of June 30th were having their effect; and, above all, the day appointed for the Saar plebiscite (January 13th, 1935) was near at hand. Its ill-success was not due to a number of German courts deciding that the Reichbischof's procedure was unlawful; that was an effect, not a cause, of the failure. In 1933 the Prussian General Superintendents withdrew their appeal to the State Court against the appointment of the State Commissioner (an appeal that the German Christians compared to Severing's) almost as soon as it was lodged, although the same judge of the Supreme Court, Flohr, whose ruling was accepted by numerous courts throughout Germany in 1934, had established the illegality of the former interference, too. But now the Reich Church Constitution that had been accepted under unlawful pressure suddenly

became a legal basis, even for the Church leaders. This was why even a Nazi jurist, such as Professor Noack, of Halle, now found that he was able to side with the opponents of the over-zealous Müller, in other words, to disavow the interpretation of the law that had been vouched for by his Führer only a week or two before.

But when the Church advanced to the counter-attack and with a unanimity hitherto unknown in the history of German Protestantism demanded the resignation of the "*Reibi*" it became clear that Adolf Hitler was not yet by any means disposed to drop his confidential assistant who had blurted out so blatantly the true aim of the "National Church": "A German Church free from the shackles of Rome!" (first announced on May 14th, 1934, at the "incorporation" of Thuringia).

Müller kept his post, and on November 6th and 7th Frick gave stricter orders than before, and in the most peremptory manner, that no reference should be made in public to the ecclesiastical dispute, only Church Government announcements being excluded from the embargo. The first reference he made to the subject was in March, 1935, *after* the Saar plebiscite: "To restore order for the second time there seems to be no alternative but for the Reich Government to define its attitude towards the matter, as it did in July, 1933, so as to decide authoritatively the rights and wrongs of the business".

A few days before Frick's speech (which was delivered at Nuremberg on March 28th), and as a prelude to the decision of the Government, which

was pre-announced under the pretty heading, "The principle of State neutrality can no longer be maintained", some Evangelical pastors, including a lecturer at the University of Giessen, were taken to a concentration camp (at Dachau, of all places).[1] This was the first occasion on which these drastic methods were adopted since the beginning of the ecclesiastical dispute. Further arrests were made until Kerrl succeeded in putting a stop to them—at least temporarily—in the autumn of 1935.

Afterwards—partly, no doubt, on account of the disturbed state of public opinion abroad, notably in England—considerably milder methods were adopted, and, viewed as a whole, the chief difference between the third totalitarianizing wave and the two that had preceded it was that it came about without much outcry, or use of force. These tactics were eminently successful. Compared with the indignation aroused by the first open interference on the part of the State (*i.e.*, the appointment of Jäger on June 24th, 1933), it was with astonishing calm, not to say apathy, that the people accepted the enactment (on June 26th) of a Reich law for the arbitrary deciding of disputed points of canonical law, the appointment of Minister Kerrl as Reich Minister for Church Affairs (July 16th), and the entrusting to him of the executive power for all matters concerning the Evangelical Churches (September 24th). These measures were accepted, although they meant the destruction of the Evange-

[1] Dachau, near Munich, was notorious for the severe treatment which prisoners underwent there.

lical Churches' legal basis not merely on one particular point but on every possible point, for the "authoritative" establishment of any possible "right", so far as they were concerned, was entrusted to the Minister Kerrl, or a commission to be convened by him—and such a body, calling itself the Reich Church Commission and Old Prussian State Church Commission, of an obviously partial composition, was convened on October 14th, 1935.

There was only one reason why this third and clumsiest interference on the part of the State seemed necessary to Hitler, and there is only one reason why, in spite of the steps taken by Kerrl, the story of the Evangelical Church dispute is not yet at an end and the victory of the National Socialist ideal, which is ultimately that of a National Church, is not yet complete: while the dispute was being waged there arose, quite distinct from the Church Governments and the "Church leaders", a new front, or rather a new "Confessional", Church, to which we must now turn our attention.

THE COUNTER-ATTACK BY THE CONFESSIONAL CHURCH

When, in the spring of 1933, the German Christians were preparing to capture the Evangelical Churches, the old groups of the Old Prussian Union (Positives and Liberals), who up till then had been at loggerheads, issued a joint manifesto, in which occurred the words: "We offer thanks to God for having given us a new State with a Christian foundation and we wish to take our part in raising the superstructure. . . . We reject the preliminary

ection of electors. We approve of 'the Evangelical hurch of the German Nation' and demand that be built up in accordance with its inmost essence". fter all, questions of Church constitution were not ally vital. To this swan-song the German Christians paid not the least attention.

Rather more perturbing to them was the formation of a new "Young Reformers' Movement", which was prepared to admit even National Socialists nd, according to its objects as formulated on May 12th, "gladly welcomed the new German tate", but demanded freedom for the Church, a table teaching authority (as opposed to the 'Evangelical freedom" of the German Christians), and the retention of non-Aryans in the hurch ("The State's function is to judge, the hurch's is to save"). On the other hand, this novement, too, demanded a new Church structure, Reichsbischof, and a "new creed" that would esult from "the Gospel's answer to the question f race, people, and State", to be given by the xisting creeds.

At the Church elections all the former groups had isappeared, except in Southern Germany. In most every constituency the German Christian st was opposed—where any opposition was allowed —by only one other list, which originally went under he name of "Evangelical Church", changed to 'Evangel and Church" on the intervention of the *Gestapo*.[1] It was in the election manifesto of the 'Young Reformers' Movement" that there occurred

[1] *Ge*heime *Staatspo*lizei, secret State police.

or the first time the watchword " We are fightin for a Confessional Church ".

After the elections the pressure exerted on th movement by the State forced its Reich directorat to announce that it was " withdrawing " it fro Church politics so as not to expose it to the suspicio of being inimical to the State ; instead, it wou devote its energies to the Church's " new, interna theologically missionary, orientation ". Only a fe weeks later, on September 5th, a new law concernin Church officials (with an Aryan paragraph) wa rushed through the Prussian General Synod, wit a total disregard for the " Evangel and Church " party, which was in a minority of 71 to 156. Thi hectoring procedure, which flouted all ecclesiastica tradition, compelled the non-German Christia group, which was ready for co-operation, to with draw from the Synod.

It was about this time that there came int existence the " Emergency League of Pastors " (*Pfarrernotbund*), formed for the mutual support o the clergy endangered by the prevailing chaos in Church affairs. By September 21st its membershi was 1,300, by Christmas 6,000 (almost a third of t German pastorate). Its first public appearance w on September 27th, 1933, when it presented petition to the Wittenberg National Synod. In th petition it protested against the forcible metho of the German Christians, the danger to the pastoral office resulting from the same, and the application to the Church of the Aryan paragraph, " which is contrary to Holy Scripture and the Church's creed ".

The theological faculty at Marburg had come to the same conclusion in a considered opinion issued on September 20th, whereas on the 25th the Lutheran theological faculty of Erlangen was in favour of excluding converted Jews from the pastoral office, but without disputing or restricting their membership of the German Evangelical Church.

On Saturday, November 11th, 1933, the eve of the Reichstag elections, the Emergency League leaders, Pastors Niemöller, von Rabenau, and Scharf, were suspended from their duties by their superiors for the first time. That night the prohibition was rescinded, at the suggestion of the Reich Chancellery. On Monday, the 13th, it was again put into operation, and on Thursday, the 16th, again rescinded. On the 19th the Emergency League pastors read for the first time from their pulpits, during divine service, a proclamation of the League. It contained the following passage dealing with the German Christian manifesto delivered at the Berlin Sportpalast: "Paganism has made its way into the Church. . . . We preachers of the Gospel have no desire to incur the reproach of the Prophet: 'they are all dumb dogs'. . . ."

On December 20th, 1933, the day after the Reichsbischof, by an arrangement made with Baldur von Schirach, had delivered the Evangelical Youth to the Hitler Jugend (despite the reasoned protest of its leaders), the Emergency League declared its lack of confidence in Müller. (Five weeks later their action was imitated by the "Church leaders", against whose "capitulation of January

27th " the League, " struck with amazement an dismay ", protested on the 31st). And on Januar 3rd, 1934, there met at Barmen the first *free Syno* composed of 320 pastors and elders from 1 *Reformed* parishes in Germany. It was with th synod that the " Confessional Church " in Germa first really came into existence. It was here th there first appeared something more than a leag (however necessary it might have been) or a ecclesiastico-political party. It was here that a Evangelical Church, in the strict Reformatory sens first began to be visible in this Protestant Churc dispute.

The Synod adopted a " Resolution concerning th correct appreciation of the Reformatory creeds i the German Evangelical Church of to-day ", whic was planned and discussed by Karl Barth. Thi Reformed professor of theology at Bonn had com to the front on June 25th, 1933, the day of th appointment of the Prussian State Commissioner with his treatise entitled *Theologische Existenz Heute*, o which 30,000 copies were sold in six months In this work he showed that he alone could compar with Dr. Pechmann in his realization of t ecclesiastical situation, for he, too, declared t there were no religious grounds for the sudd building of a " Reich Church ", and both Germa Christians and " Young Reformers " were subjecte to almost equally severe criticism.

The founder of " dialectical theology ", who had already been active in Germany for at least te years, gradually occupied the rôle of mentor to th

ew-born " Confessional Church ", in virtue of the eries of publications to which his first work gave ise, and the part he played in its synods in the ormation of the new Church. Barth's co-operation ame to an end on his accepting a call to Basel, ter he had been retired by Reichsminister Rust June, 1935. He had already been suspended in ovember, 1934, but the disciplinary proceedings, which were taken to the supreme court of appeal, ad resulted, not in his dismissal, but in a reduction f salary. Barth had refused to take the oath of llegiance to Hitler without certain religious reservations, and he only agreed to renounce these eservations on being assured by ecclesiastical uthorities with whom he was on intimate terms, that hey were taken for granted by every Evangelical hristian who took the oath. Karl Barth has now been forbidden by the Third Reich to take any personal part in the affairs of German Protestantism, as is clear from the fact that he was expelled from he country on attempting to deliver a religious address at Barmen in the autumn of 1935.

Another, but smaller, Synod of Reformed parishes as held at Stettin on February 4th, and on the 18th d 19th the first " Free Evangelical Synod in the hineland ", this time at Barmen again. The latter onfirmed the resolution that had been adopted by s predecessor. Then followed, on similar lines, a ' Free Evangelical Synod in Berlin and Brandenburg ", which was held on March 7th. On the 16th, after the dissolution, at the instance of the *Gestapo*, f the " Westphalian Provincial Synod ", the only

one where the " Evangel and Church " group was in a majority (of 80 to 60), this majority reassembled as the " Westphalian Confessional Synod ".

And after the Reichsbischof had made his first attempt at deposing the Württemberg State Bishop Wurm, (on April 15th), the latter, who, to substantiate his capitulation to Hitler's confidential assistant, had had the Emergency League of Pastors dissolved in Württemberg on January 31st, joined, in the company of Bishop Meiser of Bavaria, the new " Confessional Community of the German Evangelical Church " at Ulm on April 22nd. On May 23rd the community was joined by the Hanoverian State Bishop Marahrens, whose Church had been " incorporated " into the Reich Church on the 15th, without regard to his privileged position as a Lutheran. He was subsequently rewarded for this valiant display of faith with the presidency of the administration of the Confessional Church but continued to terminate his appeals with " Heil Hitler ! "

Since in the meantime conscientious pastors and laymen in the other desolated State Churches and Old Prussian Church Provinces had banded themselves together into Confessional communities, it was possible to hold at Barmen, on May 29th, the first Reich Synod of the Confessional Community of the German Evangelical Church and simultaneously a Confessional Synod of the Old Prussian Union Church.

Regarding the serious threat offered by the German Christians to the German Evangelical

Church "as a *League* of German Confessional Churches", the Synod made the following declaration :

"As members of the Lutheran, Reformed, and United Churches, we may and must now speak of this matter with one voice. Precisely because we wish to be and remain true to our respective creeds, we may not hold our peace, for we believe that it has been given to us to make a common declaration at a time of common trial and tribulation."

Then follow six propositions, establishing by Biblical authority the absolute supremacy of Christ in His Church and His absolute control of the whole life of all its members, and rejecting the contrary heresies, in particular that by which "the State, exceeding its proper function, may and ought to be the sole and complete controller of human existence" (Proposition 5). This theological exposition was accompanied by a legal one, in which it was stated that the Reich Church administration had deserted the basis of the German Evangelical Church and had thereby "stultified its claim to be the lawful government of the German Evangelical Church". It was the communities and churches professing one and the same creed which composed "the rightful German Evangelical Church ; they were united in defence of the Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church".

On October 20th, 1934, shortly after the "Reichs-

bischof" had been finally installed in office and the second totalitarianizing wave had slowly begat to ebb, this Confessional Synod met for the second time, at Dahlem, near Berlin, where Martin Niemöller, a former U-boat commander, had been pastor since 1931. It declared that " in matters affecting the Church, its doctrine, and its government the Church alone is fitted to pass judgement and give decisions, without prejudice to the State's right of supervision ", and, in view of the permanent anti-constitutional nature of Müller's Reich Church Administration, it proclaimed a " state of emergency " in the Church. On the strength of this, the Council of Brethren elected as a directorate by the Synod announced on November 22nd, 1934, that, in agreement with the leaders of the " intact " Churches of Hanover, Württemberg, and Bavaria (*i.e.*, not yet captured by the German Christian bishops), it had decided to set up a " Provisional Church Administration " under the presidency of Bishop Marahrens. It was not by chance that this decision was taken a month after the meeting of the Synod, at a time when the attitude of the State again raised hopes of a compromise. It meant that the Confessional Church was to be controlled, not by the Council of Brethren, which was elected directly by the Synod but by a body dominated by precisely those Church leaders (Marahrens, Meiser, and Wurm) who had already capitulated so often. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that Niemöller left the Reich Council of Brethren with one of his friends (with the Prussian Council, which was still the authority

for his State Church, he continued to co-operate ; and he returned to the Reich Council in June, 1935, when the third totalitarianizing wave was at its height and impelled the Confessional Churchmen to present an united front). From the purely juristic standpoint this new solution was most successful. The "*Reibi*" made repeated applications to the courts for an injunction restraining "the provisional directorate of the German Evangelical Church" (*i.e.*, Bishop Marahrens) from using this title and from acting on it, but they were dismissed on each occasion, the last being on June 2nd, 1935, by the Court of Appeal at Berlin. But on June 26th a Reich Law was passed, enabling the Reich Minister for the Interior, and subsequently the Reich Minister for Church Affairs, to set up an arbitrative body for the authoritative settlement of possible ecclesiastico-legal questions, thus providing a "legal basis" for the oppression of the Church.

But this juristic success was gained at the cost of an internal discord which was veiled but not removed by the unanimity of the resolutions taken by the third Confessional Synod held at Augsburg on June 4th-6th, 1935. It was significant that the compiler of the report on the proceedings was obliged to add : "The resolution taken by the Synod regarding work among the youth has been misinterpreted by the public as meaning that the Confessional Church now recognizes the agreement of December 19th, 1933. This is not the case. The paragraph in question relates merely to the decision that the Confessional Church is compelled

for the time being to carry on its work among the youth according to the aforesaid agreement. The Church will not forget that on December 19th, 1933, its work among the youth was betrayed by a hireling."

Still more significant, perhaps, is the circular letter sent by the Emergency League of Pastors to its members on July 30th : " During the last few months our hopes of a decisive success for our Church directorate and of the State's recognition of the Confessional Church have been frustrated time and time again. . . . But the Word of God tells us : ' Set your hope entirely on grace '. . . Our failing in this respect lies like a ban on our Confessional Church. . . . We have brought this ban upon ourselves for we have disavowed what God entrusted to us at Barmen and Dahlem." Barmen and Dahlem, be it noted, but not a word about Augsburg in this connection.

Augsburg is mentioned with Barmen and Dahlem only in a later passage, where it is no longer a question only of what God has willed but also of the human directions and instructions which it had now been decided to obey unanimously.

When, then, later on in this most important document God was thanked for giving the Confessional Synods " a word applicable to the whole of the German Evangelical Church ", the members of the League were exhorted not to forget " that this unity does not relieve us of our obligations to our—different—creeds ", and thus the necessary reference was made to the other, less pressing but certainly no

less deep-seated, dissension in the Confessional Church, co-existent with that between the accommodating and the uncompromising parties: the dissension between the traditional creeds, first and foremost between the Lutheran and the "Reformed" (*i.e.*, Calvinist) Churches. In addition, there was the tension between these two Churches and that of the Prussian Union. And finally there was the tension between the really "positive" "Confessional" Christians and the not so rare "Liberals", whose disgust for the methods employed by the German Christians had induced them to join the "Confessional Front" but who did not by any manner of means consider themselves bound to the old-established creeds on every point, with the theological as well as practical consequences that would arise therefrom, one being the recognition of the Church Administration's authority to teach, an authority which, so far as they were concerned, they prided themselves on having "scrapped" in favour of "scientific freedom".

To this problem there seems at present to be no solution. Even in 1933 the Lutheran Professor Hermann Sasse, of Erlangen, in an essay on the Reich Church Constitution of 1933, which appeared in the September number of *Theologische Blätter* under the title "The German Union of 1933", objected that it was not a League of Churches, as Kapler had formerly said he wanted it to be and as the Barmen Synod subsequently decided that it was, but an "unanimous and united Church", another stage on the way to a National Church as a

logical development of the Prussian Union, into whose "Babylonian captivity" the Lutheran Churches had delivered themselves in the person of their bishops who had signed the Constitution. On many subsequent occasions also Sasse felt it his duty to protest, in company with all for whom only Lutheranism pure and undefiled formed the Church of Christ, against unionism, which he saw represented principally by the Confessional Synods, which in their turn envisaged the Reformed and Lutherans as forming a common front. In the course of the dissension Karl Barth was the subject of unduly bitter personal attacks, especially on the part of those for whom Sasse's straightforward exposition of the facts served as an excuse for indulging in "Lutheran love of the State". For the Confessionalists who have been "brought into line" with the State rightly see in Barth the most successful expounder of a theological principle which has at any rate the intention of continually judging and reviving the historical creeds from the standpoint of the Bible and of Christ. We can see here that the two tensions already mentioned are in some respects interdependent, inasmuch as in those quarters where the actual *confessing* of the faith is put in the forefront there is usually also the inclination to risk a fight for the Church which has been internally revived and freed from all worldly considerations. Where, on the other hand, emphasis is laid on the traditional *confession* of faith, the retention of the traditional status of a State Church (still "guaranteed" in Bavaria and Prussia by the agreements of 1924 and

1931) is unconditionally preferred to the terrifyingly precarious existence of a "Free Church". It is a state of affairs which, in view of the likelihood of the confessionally more elastic tendency finding favour with the coming generation, presents extraordinary possibilities of a further deepening of this neo-evangelical interpretation of the Scriptures and the Church.

Unquestionably the general forecast made by Karl Barth in his fourth lecture on "The Church and the Churches" is applicable to this unification of the Protestant Churches. He states the question which each of the Churches might well ask itself: "In dealing with the realities and the problems that encompass the Church, do we in our particular Church really hearken to the commands of Christ in the way that we profess and theoretically expound? Do we deal with them in accordance with our own tradition and creed? Do we allow our relations with the State, for instance—in these days this particular portion of the outside world is uppermost in all our minds—to be controlled by Christ in the way that befits us, in the way that our creed openly lays down for us? Or do we in this as in other respects follow a course of action, of strategy, of tactics, whereby we are hearkening to entirely different voices—possibly most respectable voices, but voices which have nothing to do with Christ? I can assure you that if only two or three Churches—no matter how far different from each other, no matter how far separated—were to ask themselves this question in a humble, repentant spirit, these

Churches would automatically become a Church which would be visible to all."

Barth continues with an allusion to the develop ment that was so vigorously promoted by hi influence and might possibly be regarded as the firs forerunner of that final reunion of the Churche foretold by Soloviev in his *Antichrist*: "Th Lutheran and the Reformed Churches of Germany drew nearer to each other in recent years in propor tion as they realized—from the standpoint, of course of their respective creeds—that they were faced with the practical decision demanded of them by Christ. Can it be, perhaps, that other Churches also need to be spurred on by adversity to devote a little more attention to their duty of giving practical expression to their ecclesiastical principles in order —without the need of unions and previous to an attempt at union—to have some experience of the one Church amid a multiplicity of Churches?"

Had a path been struck that promised to lead, not to the caricature of a national Church, but to the reality of the one Church of Christ? Before we make our humble attempt at answering this question we must turn our attention to the fate of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich.

THE ATTACK ON THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

BEFORE Karl Barth's appeal to it to recollect itself had given rise to the formation of a Confessional Church within itself, German Protestantism had offered little resistance to the National Socialist agents and shock troops who were invading its organization. The assault was facilitated by the prevalent notion that no conflict was possible between Protestantism and national movements and by the fact that the Protestant hierarchy was not sacramentally established, though the development of the State Church, especially during the nineteenth century, was hardly in accordance with Luther's ideas, to say nothing of Calvin's. It is true that up to the present National Socialist hopes of bringing Protestantism into line without any serious resistance have not been realized—as we have seen in the previous chapter—but Hitler's emissaries have succeeded in creating confusion within the Church and in possessing themselves of a large part of the Church's administrative machinery.

There was not the slightest hope of employing these methods successfully against the Catholic Church and the German Catholics. Here the situation was entirely different. It was impossible to attack this hierarchy without it being known to

every member of the Church that anti-ecclesiastica aims were being pursued. This hierarchy was onl a part of a universal hierarchy and was supporte by a non-German head whose influence was world wide and who could not be dealt with in the sam way as Protestant world-opinion and its variou by-products. It was therefore impossible to unde mine the German Catholic Church by some suc movement as the "German Christians" and appoint as primate, for the purpose of reorganizin its existence, a confidential assistant of the Führer' such as Ludwig Müller.

From the very beginning, therefore, the contes with the Catholic Church was conducted on line entirely different from those on which that with th Protestant Church was conducted. Both denomina tions were repeatedly assured in similar langua that National Socialism had not the remotest desi to interfere with the domestic life of the Church to encroach on the domain of dogma and belief, but it was well known that the consecrated bishops and the Pope belonged to the Catholic Church in a very different manner from that in which the Genera Superintendents for the time being belonged to th Protestant Church ; consequently it was impossib to treat the organization and the leading authoritie of the Catholic Church in the same way as those o the Protestant, namely as an artificial busines subject to the varying demands of the hour and popular opinion. On the other hand, it might be possible to set off the Church's invariability and religious mission, which was independent of politica

hanges, against organized Cath lic life, which was aturally dependent on a particul r historical period. ccordingly a sharp distinction w as drawn between -called " political " Catholicism, which was con- sted, and religious Catholicism, which, ostensibly, as held in high esteem. The Church was to nounce this " political " Catholicism, acknowledge e dissolution of the Centre party as a *fait accompli*, nd, as its definite partner, throw herself on the rotection of the State. But when all this actually ame to pass, " political Catholicism ", which the hurch regarded as having expired together with e so-called Catholic parties, went on living under arious forms as the ever-present enemy of National ocialism, and the Third Reich's idea of the State's rotection of the Church turned out to be rather fferent from what the Church had expected. e National Socialist State tried more and more restrict the Church's influence on public opinion ithout attempting to take possession of the Church's dministration as it had done in the case of the rotestants. The efforts made to carry out this estriction are the chief feature of the history of e Catholic Church in the Hitlerian Reich.

Up to now there have been two stages in this truggle between the Catholic Church and the tate. At first the Church was induced to change er attitude towards National Socialism. The oppo- tion to it that existed before 1933—manifested by he Centre party and episcopal admonitions—had o be removed, and the means adopted was to assure e Church that though the Catholics would no

longer have the opportunity of influencing publi opinion in Germany through the usual channels the Church's position would be guaranteed, an possibly even strengthened from the religious poir of view. The outstanding events of this stage wer the withdrawal of the episcopal admonitions again National Socialism, the dissolution of the so-call Catholic parties, and the formulation of the ne relations between the Church and State by mean of a Concordat, which not only reassured th German Catholics but increased the Government international prestige.

The second stage is characterized by the gradu restriction of Catholic influence in all branches public life. There now came into the foregroun everything that during the first stage might ha been considered as merely the repercussions of form periods of strain and hostility, but on no occasi did it come to open warfare. The written guarant and the conciliatory attitude of the first stage wer still continued. All the infringements of the Con cordat and the measures taken against the Churc as such, and against individual Catholics, were mad to appear, even when they were followed by ope protests, as merely incidents that could easily b rectified. But by 1934, when the attempts made t regulate the whole situation by discussing the poin in the Concordat that had been left open (Art. 3 dealing with Catholic associations and providin for executive instructions that are still not issued led to no result, the opposing fronts became mor sharply delineated. In the spring of 1935, aft

the Saar plebiscite, there began a series of examinations and prosecutions of priests and religious supposed to have infringed the currency regulations, and in the summer of the same year another and more furious attack was launched against " political Catholicism ".

During these two stages both the State and the Church have taken measures and issued manifestos designed to maintain and strengthen their respective positions. The Church has protested on legal grounds against National Socialist enactments which appear to violate the Concordat, and has warned the faithful against movements which are contrary to faith and consequently endanger the soul. The Party, and the State which it controls, have striven to penetrate still further into the sphere of public life formerly under the influence of the Church. On the one side there have been proclamations such as the pastoral letters issued by the German bishops from Fulda in 1933, 1934, and 1935 (and withheld by their opponents from public knowledge, as far as possible), the Pope's message to German Catholic Youth (Easter, 1934), Cardinal Pacelli's letter to Cardinal Schulte (spring, 1935), and the two official warnings published by the *Osservatore Romano* in the summer of 1935. Besides these public manifestos confidential representations and protests were made to State authorities by the bishops and the Papal Nuncio. On the other side there have been enactments that run counter to the Church's doctrine, such as the sterilization law, the crippling of Catholic associations, the throttling of the Catholic

Press, and the general education of the country in a *Weltanschauung* the nature of which is sufficiently indicated by Rosenberg's appointment as the Führer's representative in this department and the programmatic announcement made by Frick, the Reich Minister of the Interior, about the de-confessionalizing of the whole of public life.

To appreciate the methods by which this conflict has been waged between the Church on the one side and the State and the State-supporting movement on the other, and to realize the general significance of the conflict, it will be necessary to review its most outstanding incidents, beginning with the episcopal warnings against National Socialism, then their withdrawal, the signing of the Concordat, and, finally, the recent happenings which have laid bare National Socialism's true aims.

On Hitler's seizure of power in 1933 the Catholic Church seemed to be faced with a situation similar to that brought about by the Revolution of November, 1918. There had come into power a party which the Church had opposed by reason of its *Weltanschauung* and its attitude towards religion. In 1930-1931 the German bishops had warned their flocks against it on account of its programme (which still remains the same), though the *Osservatore Romano* pointed out that the condemnation of its religious and cultural programme did not necessarily imply refusal to co-operate politically, any more than it had in the case of the Socialists and the Liberals. The situation seemed to be even more difficult than in 1918-1919, for during the War the

Centre party had kept on good terms with the Social Democrats in spite of their obvious differences, whereas they had shown nothing but bitter hostility towards the National Socialists (the parleys that were held in the autumn of 1932 with the idea of forming a Black-and-Brown coalition were merely an episode that bore no tangible results, principally because one of the most prominent negotiators was Gregor Strasser, who was afterwards treated by the Nazis as a traitor). It is certainly true that there were Catholics who had " come to an arrangement " with Hitler, that a professed National Socialist, Kuno Brombacher, had, despite protests, addressed the Catholic Congress at Nuremberg in 1931, and that at the congress held at Essen in 1932 a German Catholic Workers' Association, then under unknown control, demanded that the relations between Catholicism and National Socialism should be treated in terms favourable to Hitler—but all this was of no importance compared with the fact that the subsequent president of this workers' association, Von Papen, the representative of " Conservative Catholicism ", who as Reich Chancellor had initiated the downfall of democratic parliamentarianism by wrecking the black-red-gold coalition in Prussia—that this man should have been able to lay claim to having played a decisive part in the formation of Hitler's Cabinet. In this Cabinet the leader of the N.S.D.A.P. was surrounded by a majority of Conservatives (8 to 3, now only 9 to 7). Papen, as Vice-Chancellor, must surely have secured special privileges for himself, and, if that were so,

the exclusiveness of National Socialist claims were not so alarming after all.

But, although the Reich Government proclaimed in its summons to the nation on February 1st, 1933, that " Christianity, the basis of our national morality, will be taken under our sure protection . . . and may the Almighty bless our undertaking . . . " nevertheless the German bishops did not retract their warnings against the N.S.D.A.P. The first of these warnings had been issued after the National Socialist successes in the election of September 12th, 1930. The most drastic was that published by the diocesan authorities of Mainz, which forbade Catholics to become registered members of the Hitler party under pain of being excluded from the Sacraments, the reason given being that Art. 24 of the National Socialist programme contained statements that were irreconcilable with Catholic doctrine. As a result of this decision the Catholic National Socialist *Gau* leader Gemeinder was buried without religious rites. On February 10th, 1931, the Bavarian bishops warned their dioceses against National Socialism " so long as, and in so far as, it proclaims cultural-political conceptions that are irreconcilable with Catholic doctrine . . . National Socialist Christianity is not the Christianity of Christ. . . . The principles on which the Bishops base their action in respect of National Socialism are those which were authoritatively established long ago in respect of Liberalism and recently, in respect of Socialism ". Section 4 read as follows : " In the event of National Socialism adopting the method

f *Bolshevism*—which we trust will never happen—
t would no longer be possible to credit the individual,
e., the members of the N.S.D.A.P., with good
ith. In general, the parish clergy is to follow the
uiding principles laid down at the bishops' con-
rences at Fulda and Freising regarding *associations*
hich are inimical to the Faith."

The Centre refused to participate in Hitler's
abinet, and during the elections definitely opposed
e "National Government". The Catholic asso-
ations issued a joint appeal to the public on these
nes, and the bishops made an announcement which
as of great service to the Centre. When the
National Socialists attempted to reap the profit of
his and other episcopal announcements which
ntained no direct mention of the so-called
Catholic" parties, some of the bishops publicly
clared that they were in favour of the Centre
d the Bayrische Volkspartei. Bishop Ehrenfried
f Würzburg expressed his appreciation of the State
Government, which was controlled by the Bayrische
Volkspartei, on February 23rd, and Bishop Borne-
vasser of Trier announced: "So far as I am con-
erned, I cannot conscientiously vote for any other
rty but the Centre, and that is what I shall do".
On February 25th Bishop Kaller of Ermland
ublicly denounced the newspaper *Warmia*, which
alled itself Catholic but supported the N.S.D.A.P.,
nd he praised the Centre, "whose world theory is
based on the supernatural, on God, so that it is free
om the clashes inseparable from the pursuit of
ersonal gain and is independent of ephemeral

values". The Bishop concluded with "For us Catholics, when it comes to the point, there is no question of voting for any other party but the Centre".

Then came the burning of the Reichstag, on February 27th, 1933, and the elections of March 5th which resulted in a decisive success for National Socialism. It was clear, especially in Bavaria, that even Catholics had succumbed to the National Socialist whirlwind. What would be the upshot? Bitter references were made by the National Socialists to the episcopal admonitions, the chief charge being that they were issued at the instigation of party politicians. On March 7th the *Völkischer Beobachter* put the question, "Do the German bishops recognize the German movement?" On the 29th it asserted that it had every right to talk of Centre party bishops and prelates. "For ten whole years the programme of the N.S.D.A.P. was left unchallenged by the bishops. It was not until the N.S.D.A.P. was a definite danger to the Centre and the Bavarian People's Party as political organizations that heretical doctrines were discovered in the party and its programme. It was the parliamentarians of the Centre who were the first and the bitterest enemies of the new movement; the Church leaders merely followed in their train." A week previously (March 21st) Hitler had refused to attend the Catholic counterpart of the religious service that was held at Potsdam to celebrate the opening of the Reichstag, stating publicly that his refusal was due to the episcopal admonitions. The

bishops, he said, had " branded the leaders and the members of the N.S.D.A.P. as apostates who were not to be permitted to partake of the Sacraments. This decision has not yet been withdrawn. . . . " On the very next day (March 22nd) the *Bayrischer Kurier* published this statement as coming from a responsible ecclesiastical source : " The designation ' apostate ' (as applied to adherents of the N.S.D.A.P.) is . . . absolutely inappropriate ". On March 23rd Hitler made certain announcements to the Reichstag in which the Christian creeds were recognized as " the most important factors in the preservation of our national welfare " and in which it was stated on behalf of the National Government that " it will honour the agreements they [the Creeds] have made with the various States ". With regard to the Holy See : " In the same way as we consider the forces of Christianity as indispensable to the moral renascence of the German people, we desire to develop our friendly relations with the Holy See ". This advance was quickly reciprocated by the bishops in a joint announcement made on March 28th, that is to say almost simultaneously with the publication of the foregoing article in the *Völkischer Beobachter* in which they were attacked as " Centre Party Bishops ". " Without withdrawing the condemnation of certain religious and moral errors against which we have been forced to take steps, the Episcopacy believes that it has reason to hope that the general prohibitions and admonitions that have been issued need no longer be considered necessary."

But this new attitude towards the National Socialist movement, which was now in control of the country, did not by any means imply whole-hearted approval, or even acceptance, of whatever measure the Government might think fit to take. An announcement made by the Bavarian bishops at the beginning of April, but not reproduced in the German Press, ran as follows: "There is no need to state expressly that the remission made by the German bishops is in no way an exhortation to the people to join the National Socialist Party, seeing that the bishops expressly state that the condemnation already passed on certain religious errors still holds good. This is borne out by numerous announcements made by bishops, either separately or jointly, in which they declared their attitude towards various manifestations of the new regime. They took their stand by those who, to quote the statement made by Cardinal Bertram on October 15th, 'in the days of party government followed those leaders who from a sense of religious duty strove to conduct the campaign against Marxism and Bolshevism by methods appropriate to the form of government then in force'—in other words they took their stand by the public servants who by reason of their being members of the Centre party had been dismissed or otherwise ill-treated. Moreover, they refused to allow the work of the past to go unrecognized. 'Far be it from us to be unjust and ungrateful to those who, putting their own interests on one side, struggled valiantly and achieved much in the troublous times that succeeded

ıe War'." (Episcopal Conference at Freising, [ay 5th, 1933).

The pastoral letter signed by all the bishops and sued from Fulda on June 3rd, 1933, laid down the eneral principles to be followed under the new gime. *Inter alia*, it warned the faithful against an unchristian policy of revenge" and against an exclusive preoccupation with race and blood", opposed the idea of a national Church, and emanded for the Church a freedom "which is ot to be restricted to ecclesiastical life in the narrow ense of the term". It insisted accordingly on enominational schools and training-schools for eachers, on Catholic associations, youth organizaions in particular, and on a Catholic Press.

It seemed as though the friendly advances made y the bishops towards the National Socialist movent were to be rewarded with success. Although eir announcement of March 28th had not been nticipated by the Vatican, and is, therefore, not o be regarded as a diplomatic move on the part of Rome, nevertheless it paved the way for negotiations which had as their object the fixing by written greement of the relations between the Catholic Church and the Reich. The signing of a Concordat, which had been talked about for fourteen years but concerning which no direct negotiations ould be initiated, owing to party strife, was now ffected with the greatest possible despatch. It was signed, as early as July 20th, by Cardinal Pacelli, Secretary of State, and Vice-Chancellor von Papen. Among others who were present at the solemn

ceremony that concluded the proceedings was the prelate Kaas, the former chairman of the Centre party, who on March 23rd had stated to the Reichstag the reasons that had induced his party to give its assent to the so-called Enabling Act that legalized Hitler's assumption of unlimited powers. The terms of the Concordat seemed to be remarkably advantageous for the Church. Having as its general object " the permanent settlement of the relations between the Catholic Church and the State in a manner satisfactory to both parties ", it completed, without superseding, the former Concordats that had been made with the separate States. It recognized the right of " professing and publicly practising the Catholic religion " and " the right of the Catholic Church to settle her own affairs independently within the limits of universally binding laws ". It guaranteed both the episcopacy and the Holy See " complete freedom of intercourse with the faithful in matters appertaining to their pastoral office ". Pastoral letters might be " published without let or hindrance and brought to the knowledge of the faithful in the manner that has been customary hitherto ". " In the performance of their spiritual tasks the clergy will enjoy the same protection of the State as is accorded to State officials ". The oath of loyalty to the State taken by a bishop was restricted by the words " as beseems a bishop ". " The retention and maintenance of Catholic denominational schools is guaranteed as before ". During religious instruction " special attention is to be paid to inculcating patriotic, civic,

nd social principles, in accordance with the spirit f Christian faith and morals, as in all other branches f education". "Questions dealing with eccle- astical persons and things that have not been rovided for in the foregoing articles will be settled the ecclesiastical sphere according to the Canon aw in force."

What return had the Church to make for this feguarding by the State, not only of her organiza- ons, but also—as it would appear—of her position public life, yes, even of her moral influence on e people? Art. 31 afforded protection "both as gards their composition and their activities" to atholic organizations "exclusively devoted to eligious, purely cultural, or charitable ends and cordingly subject to ecclesiastical authority", t provision was made for "Catholic organizations rving not only religious, cultural, or charitable ds but also others, such as social or professional", o be classified as State corporations but to enjoy tate protection only when "they offer guarantees hat their activity will not be connected with any olitical party". The category to which the arious organizations and corporations should belong as to be decided after further discussions between he Reich Government and the German episcopate. rt. 32 announced that in view of the special onditions prevailing in Germany and the provisions f the Concordat the Holy See would forbid the lergy, both secular and regular, to become members f, or actively support, a political party. But, as was ipulated in the concluding protocol, this did not

imply "any restriction in the promulgation an explanation of the dogmatic and moral teaching and principles of the Church, when carried out i the course of clerical duty". What was forbidde was to play any active *rôle* in a political *party*.

The terms of the Concordat corresponded to t changed conditions that had come about in German as a result of the National Revolution. The Centr party had signed its own death warrant by assentin to the Enabling Act, and had been formally dissolv on July 5th, by which time the Bayrische Volkspart had also put an end to its own existence. Conse quently, the Church found herself face to face wit the State, without any intermediary. A way mus be found of continuing her influence on public lif under these new conditions, in which all parti (with the exception of the one in power, it ne hardly be said) were regarded as enemies of t State, and in which public life was canalized in State corporations even more markedly than before for the National Socialist associations and organiza tions, such as the Labour Front, were furnishe with rights that converted them for all practica purposes into State corporations. The Concorda seemed to confirm the privileges that the Churc had already secured for herself, and even to exten them in some respects—witness, for example, th permission given to German clerics to study at Papal academy in Rome—and at the same time conform with the new political regime. Moreove it appeared to effect the immediate removal difficulties of recent origin : some important Catho

ıssociation headquarters had been occupied by the ;ivil authorities on July 1st, before a definite agree-ıent had been reached, but as soon as the treaty vas initialled on the 8th the premises were vacated ın Hitler's instructions.

It seemed, then, th t the signing of the Concordat ındicated those members of the Catholic Church in Germany who either regarded "political Catho-icism" as having been "necessary and highly ıeritorious but, nevertheless, an abnormality emanded by the times" or accused it of having ommitted the sin against the Holy Ghost in allying tself with Marxism. Typical representatives of hese views were, in the first case, the church ıistorian Lortz (*vide* the supplement to his *History f the Church*, which was written, with ecclesiastical pprobation, for use in secondary schools), in the :cond, Freiherr von Lüninck, appointed Provincial resident of the Rhineland by the National Govern-ment, who voiced his opinion at the Catholic Academic Congress held at Maria Laach im-mediately after July 20th and attended by Papen, who had hurried thither by aeroplane from Rome. At that time, too, men and women, carried away by their enthusiasm for "the Holy Year of the Church and the German People", compiled articles and brochures, which they are now eager to forget, testifying to the bond of union which had always existed between Catholicism and National Socialism, but which somehow had passed unnoticed until 1933. This section of the faithful, composed of disgruntled intellectuals, highly placed civil servants,

and theologians beguiled by pseudo-Christian ter
minology, foregathered mostly in the Germa
Catholic Workers' Association, presided over b
Papen, which would willingly have played the pa
of the German Christians in the Catholic Churc
but which, unfortunately, was dissolved in th
autumn of 1934. Papen's policy was represented i
the Press by a series of publications entitled *Reic*
und Kirche (published by Aschendorff, of Münster
and by *Germania*, under the editorship of Em
Ritter. In addition to the pro-Papen Catholic
there were smaller groups of Catholics who wer
even more radically in favour of National Socialism
One of their exponents was the dogmatist Eschweiler
of Braunsberg. In 1932 he was writing against an
and every *Weltanschauung* that would be compelle
to misuse the State as a mere instrument ; in 193
however, he " demonstrated " that the Nationa
Socialist *Weltanschauung* was " open to the grace
God " and was naturally suited to the Germa
race ; in 1934, together with one of his colleagues a
Braunsberg, a certain Barion, professor of canon
law, he was suspended by Rome for giving an officia
verdict in which he argued that the Germa
sterilization law was compatible with the Encyclica
Casti Connubii, which in fact had condemned th
law ; and finally, in 1935, he bowed to the decisio
of Rome.

This sterilization law, which was declared to b
incompatible with Catholic doctrine both by the
Pope (in 1935, before the opening of the Inter
national Hospital Congress in Rome) and by th

German bishops (who were not to be prevailed upon by Archbishop Gröber to do more than consent to the reporting of the hereditarily diseased and definitely disallowed any co-operation in the actual sterilization)—this law had been decided on by the Reich Cabinet on July 14th, previous to the signing of the Concordat. This fact alone gave rise to the misgiving that the unrestricted promulgation of the Church's doctrine, which had been guaranteed, was not going to be so easy after all. Certainly it was not till 1935 that Reichminister Frick openly proclaimed the standpoint of the Government (which was immediately objected to by the Holy See) that owing to their recognition of "universally valid laws" Catholics were prohibited by the terms of the Concordat from opposing this law on the plea that it conflicted with the doctrine of the Church. But already, by July 28th, 1933 there had been a dispute about the interpretation of the Concordat. On July 26th and 27th the *Osservatore Romano* had published articles on the Concordat in which it was stated that the treaty was based on canon law and that its signing in no way implied approval of the National Socialist form of government or the recognition of certain National Socialist doctrines or political theories, as had been at least suggested by Herr von Papen at the Catholic Academic Congress at Maria Laach. Von Papen had in fact declared on that occasion that in view of the war against Bolshevism and godlessness waged by National Socialism the Pope was prepared to support the National Socialist movement and to sign the

Concordat " with the young Hitlerian Reich " (*via Ecclesiastica*, 1933, p. 325, note 1). As a result of the attitude taken up by Rome every German newspaper, Catholic included, was compelled to publish polemical articles " based on authoritative sources " against the *Osservatore*, which was described as " the official organ of the Vatican ". These articles declared that canon law was recognized only in so far as the internal affairs of the Church were concerned and that the Reich had not made itself subject to canon law " in respect of relations between the State and the Church that had not been regulated by the Concordat ". Bitter criticism was also levelled at the statement that the signing of the Concordat in no way implied the recognition of the National Socialist " tendency ". The German Reich was National Socialist and nothing else.

Despite this *contretemps* the Concordat was ratified by the Vatican on September 10th. The manner in which Art. 31 was to be put into effect was to be decided during the forthcoming negotiations. In certain quarters the relations between the State and the episcopate seemed to develop very amicably. As early as July 11th, 1933, Bishop Berning of Osnabrück, who had taken the place of the Bishop of Berlin (who had fallen ill) as representative of the episcopate, was invited to join the Privy Council by its President, Göring. He accepted, and, like Reichsbischof Müller, is still a member of the Council. On October 9th Archbishop Gröber had the following announcement made at Karlsruhe : " Without any doubt . . . the course of events during the l

ew months has shown that the relations between he Archbishop and the Baden Government have een of the friendliest description. It would be no etrayal of confidence to state that the Archbishop ives his wholehearted support to the Reich Govern- ent and the new Reich, the reason being that he nows the Chancellor's aims: a German Reich uilt on Christian foundations and sustained by hical and moral strength."

A month or so later came the referendum about ermany's secession from the League of Nations nd the concomitant Reichstag elections, for which ere was only *one* list of candidates, the National cialist. Cardinal Bertram's message to the ithful, which permitted every individual to vote the Reichstag elections solely according to the tate of his conscience, was allowed to appear in Press, whereas a similar announcement on the rt of the Bavarian bishops which also spoke of the incidents and edicts of the last few months which l us with anxiety and distress" was not allowed to published. In Bavaria the tension was further creased by the sermons preached by Cardinal ulhaber and published under the title *Judaism, ristianity, and Germanism*, which occasioned violent otests, notably on the part of the Hitler Youth, ich in many places (Freiburg, for example) ceeded in preventing their sale. In National cialist quarters the Cardinal's defence of the Old stament and his endeavour to dispel the false nceptions of the origin of the German race were arded as acts aimed at the destruction of the State.

Thus the year 1933 ended amid misgivings as t whether the Concordat had really effected a com plete and peaceful settlement of the relations betwee the Church and State. In his Christmas address th Pope reminded his hearers of the denunciation sterilization but, contrary to expectation, declin to speak his mind about world conditions, in oth words about the German situation. " In the preser state of affairs, in the midst of insecurity, distru and fruitless negotiations, the Holy Father mu give the same answer as was once given by a famo banker who was asked for his verdict on the gener financial situation. ' My verdict ? ' he replie ' It's impossible for me to give a verdict '. ' Wh is your opinion, then ? ' ' I can't give any opini on the matter.' ' What do you think about then ? ' ' I don't think anything at all about ' Have you nothing whatever to say on the subject ' I can only give you my impression, for which cannot give you any reasons. My impression is th nobody knows anything for certain.' This is ver little, it is true, but there can be no mistake as what was meant, and it is all that the Pope can s at the present time." With the greatest earnestn the Pope then issued a threefold appeal for pra (*Ecclesiastica*, 1934, p. 7).

That the " incidents and enactments " which h alarmed the Bavarian bishops were not mer repercussions of past years of conflict nor accide provoked by notoriously over-zealous subordina was made manifest to many minds by the appoi ment, on January 24th, of Alfred Rosenberg as

Führer's deputy for the purpose of supervising the training in *Weltanschauung* of the Party and the totalitarianized associations. A month before, Cardinal Schulte and Bishop Vogt of Aachen had protested against the inclusion of Rosenberg's *chef-d'œuvre* in school libraries, the result of which was that Hitler, after openly encouraging his trusted friend, received the Cardinal at the beginning of February to reassure him as to the purport of Rosenberg's appointment. Rosenberg's work was still nothing more than an unofficial treatise, in spite of its continued and increasing penetration into labour camps, training courses, and National Socialist journals. On February 14th the *Osservatore Romano* published the decree, dated February 7th, by which the *Mythus* was placed on the Index of forbidden books.

Rosenberg's appointment left no doubt as to the Government's intentions on the *Weltanschauung* front, but, even so, would not the Church be able, with the aid of the Concordat, to maintain her influence on the people, more especially the younger generation? A beginning had already been made in the autumn of 1933 with the building up of Catholic Action as a means of attracting and holding Catholic youth, without bringing it into conflict with, or even abandoning, the associations. The latter were to be saved by successfully negotiating the method of putting Art. 31 into effect, and now that Reichsbischof Müller had delivered Protestant youth over to the Hitler Youth, there was no time to be lost. Archbishop Gröber and Privy Councillor Bishop

Berning, afterwards joined by Bishop Bares of Berlin, were entrusted by the German episcopate with the conduct of the negotiations. They were confronted not only by Ministerialdirektor Buttmann, who, as on former occasions, represented the Government, but also by Ley, the Leader of the Labour Front, and Baldur von Schirach, the Reich Youth Leader, whose organ had printed articles and illustrations ridiculing priests, immediately after the signing of the Concordat, and some of whose public utterances gave it to be understood that he had no desire to be connected with any Christian denomination. He subsequently professed himself an adherent of the Evangelical faith, at the same time proclaiming that " the way of Rosenberg " was that of " German youth ". Threatened with his attempts to enrol them in his associations, the Catholic youth associations could only appeal to the Pope's assurance (in perfect conformity with the spirit of the Concordat contained in his letter to them of Easter, 1934) " Your associations may at any rate rest assured of this, that your interests are Our interests."

The negotiations were exceedingly protracted, and were interrupted by the Bishops' Congress at Fulda in 1934, which decided to issue a pastoral letter on June 7th. In this document the bishops complained of neo-pagan doctrines and tendencies, among whose representatives it was evident from their reference to the " Myth of Blood " that they included the Führer's deputy for *Weltanschauung*. They warned the faithful against the idea of a Rome-free National Church and placed it on record that " whereas neo

paganism makes obtrusive propaganda for itself, our Catholic Press is no longer accorded the right openly to discuss important questions of the day in the light of Catholic faith and morals or to ward off the attacks that are made on Christianity and the Church. . . . Our Catholic organizations and societies are prevented by restrictive regulations from fulfilling their functions in the service of the Church and the Fatherland. . . . We, as responsible shepherds of the flock, may not hold our peace when we see that influential bodies pay no regard to the instructions and assurances of the Reich Government and are desirous of suppressing and destroying the Christian faith and Christian life in our people". As to the allegation that their exhortations and admonitions were "unwarranted meddling with politics", they denied it absolutely.

This pastoral letter was on the point of being read in the churches when the news came through that the bishops appointed to represent the Church had every hope of bringing their negotiations to a successful issue. On June 26th Hitler received in audience a number of German bishops and assured them (according to information supplied later by the Bishop of Münster, Graf Galen) that he would take steps to put a stop to the favouring of neo-pagan propaganda by State and Party authorities. And on June 30th, 1934, an agreement was actually reached (at least with the negotiating bishops) by which the Party was recognized as a negotiating partner, and which let it appear that Art. 31 would not be put into effect until a final settlement had been signed.

On Monday, July 2nd, the following notice was published in the Press : " Negotiations have taken place between the Reich Government and representatives of the N.S.D.A.P. on the one hand and representatives of the German episcopacy on the other, concerning the putting into effect of Art. 31 of the Concordat. . . . On the basis of the agreement that has been reached during the negotiations there is every hope of instructions being issued in the immediate future concerning the management of associations which will bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion ". This announcement was not given a very prominent position in the Press, public attention still being focussed on the events of June 30th. While Privy Councillor Bishop Berning was hurrying to the final session a Catholic friend was waiting to inform him of the murder of Klausener, the leader of Catholic Action in Berlin. . . . But it was not only this that prevented the instructions being issued ; Rome refused to ratify the agreement, and Cardinal Schulte expressed his approval of the decision at a conference in August. Bishop Berning, the Privy Councillor and negotiator, who was present at the meeting, broke in with the remark, " You mustn't say that, Your Eminence ! " But I do say it, nevertheless ", replied the Cardinal. It would have been very strange if this agreement had added to the Government's moral prestige so soon after the " clean-up " of June 30th. Another impediment was the fact that the pastoral letter from Fulda was not read in the churches. For one reason it was thought best to withhold it in anticipa-

tion of a satisfactory settlement of the negotiations ; also, the *Gestapo*, in direct contravention of the Concordat, had forbidden its publication. In a legal manner, therefore, the Fulda letter of 1934 has come to the knowledge only of foreign readers, not of those for whom it was intended.

This encroachment by the State on the Church's rights was followed by another interval of quiescence. The Saar plebiscite was near at hand, and it was Catholic votes that would decide the issue. The Evangelical United Church had not yet been created, the legal administrator Jäger was still at work, however much he and his Reichsbischof might talk about a universal National Church, and no matter what attention was paid to a memorandum sent by Jäger to the Reich Government in which he weighed the chances of establishing such a Church. " There is a favourable prospect ", he wrote, " of having a National Church in a very short time. It will be opposed, presumably, by about four million Catholics and a few hundred thousand Protestants, but that difficulty will not prove insurmountable, and then the racial ideal will take precedence over the Christian one."

On July 29th Bishop Bornewasser of Trier spoke at a meeting of young men and women against the Catholic newspaper *Neue Saarpost*, which was in favour of the *status quo* [1]—a proof that the national loyalty of the Catholics was stronger than their mistrust of the Reich Government. With regard

[1] *i.e.*, in favour of the Saar remaining under the control of the League of Nations.

to the election of Hitler as Hindenburg's successor, the bishops expressed no opinion either way. The report, spread abroad through every possible channel of information, that Privy Councillor Bishop Berning had decided to write "Yes" on his voting paper was a mere electioneering trick, as was proved by a denial published in a number of official organs of the Church, but never brought to the notice of the general German public. All interests being subordinated to the forthcoming plebiscite in the Saar, Hitler, in his speech at Ehrenbreitstein on August 27th, enlarged on the theme of "genuine Christianity". Nevertheless there was no relief from the cramping regulations that made it impossible in many parts of the Reich for Catholic youth associations to appear in public, travel in company, wear distinctive badges, etc. On the other hand, nothing was done to prevent the publication in the October issues of episcopal organs of "studies" refuting Rosenberg's *Mythus*. These scholarly critiques of Rosenberg's assertions concerning the history of the Church, the Old and New Testaments, etc., were not without their influence on non-Catholic, as well as Catholic minds, being in this respect comparable to the sermons preached by Cardinal Faulhaber in 1933–34. The bishops put a stop to the movement, started by the clerics, in favour of the *status quo*, by a call to prayer, intended in the first place for the ecclesiastical province of Cologne, which showed that the German episcopate recommended the incorporation of the Saar in the Third Reich ; and at the final, critical moment, just before January

13th,[1] the deans in the Saar itself spoke unmistakably to the same effect. The Saar Catholics gave their votes for Germany—but not, as they had been continually told to do, for the National Socialist regime; and Bishop Hudal, the Rector of Santa Maria dell' Anima, the German national church in Rome, in the course of a sermon celebrating the event, spoke his famous lines about "the advance of confidence" that had been made to the National Socialist Leader of the Third Reich.

But this advance was not repaid. When the plebiscite was over, Dr. Goebbels forgot to renew his thanks which, before the plebiscite, he had expressed to the loyal Catholic leaders (that is to say, to the bishops, among others). To-day the chief editor of the *Neue Saarpost*, the journal which was in favour of the *status quo*, is joined in exile with the prelate who instigated the deans' manifesto advocating the Saar's return to Germany—Dean Schlich of Saarbrücken, who, to escape arrest, was forced to fly the country. The incorporation of the Saar in the Reich merely meant that one reason for treating the Catholics with consideration had disappeared; and the Government could now openly set to work breaking down the Church's influence in public life. As early as February there broke out at Munich, though on a grander scale, the same dispute about the schools that had been started a year before at Nuremberg, where the Party had endeavoured—with some success among the Protestants, with none among the Catholics—to persuade parents to send

[1] The day appointed for the plebiscite.

their children to non-denominational, or rather "simultaneous" schools.[1] In Munich a breach was made in the ranks of Catholic parents despite the sermon preached by Cardinal Faulhaber on February 10th against the propaganda that was being made for "simultaneous" schools, in defiance of the Concordat, by prominent members of the Party, the success of their efforts being facilitated by the prohibition of counter-measures. Then began the taking into custody of Church dignitaries, members of religious orders, male and female, vicars general, and other secular priests, on the charge of unlawful dealings in foreign currency. The public received but scanty information as to the extent to which these arrests were being made, until the hearing of the first case on May 9th—the day before the annual collection for charitable institutions maintained by the Catholic Church—which was entirely successful in spite of (or as a result of) the arrests. This day, May 9th, marked the beginning of a general onslaught on the alleged immorality of the monasteries and churches, in the course of which the public were informed from time to time that it was only the unworthy representatives of the Church and the religious orders that were being brought to book. The first announcement made by Cardinal Bertram's archiepiscopal staff, which appeared to defend the clerics who had been convicted or who were under arrest, raised such an outcry among the Nazis that it led to the removal of

[1] Schools where pupils of more than one denomination are educated.

every editor who had published it. To calm the storm, the Cardinal issued a second explanation, condemning the alleged offences and alluding to canonical proceedings, and this, if it did no other good, effected the reinstatement of the editors. Similarly, Cardinal Schulte referred to the conduct of the superior of a nunnery who had been sentenced to a term of penal servitude as " one of the most bitter disappointments he had ever had ". Meanwhile, the currency prosecutions went on at irregular intervals. The case against the Vicar-General of Hildesheim was long postponed, and when he was eventually sentenced to four and a half years' penal servitude the sensation it aroused was comparatively slight, for in October the Bishop of Meissen had been arrested, not, " needless to say ", as the State authorities took pains to state, because he was a bishop, but as an individual suspected of having participated in an infringement of the currency regulations.

The " clerical currency-criminals " afforded a good excuse for anti-clerical demonstrations, in which even the hierarchy was attacked, as appears from the formal protests made by the Archbishop of Paderborn and the Bishops of Trier and Rottenburg. The Bishop of Trier was compelled to announce publicly that his protest against the insults that had been offered to himself and, in his presence, to Catholic youth associations, had been left unanswered. Nor is it known that any other bishop's protest was answered, though, incidentally, many of the protests were no more destined for public

perusal than the Vatican White Book concerning the infringements of the Concordat and the corresponding notes made by the Papal Nunzio, which had been sent to the bishops in 1934. But some of the protests have become known to the general public, notably a most impressive letter written by the Berlin Vicar Capitular, Steinmann, concerning the continual confiscation of the Berlin church gazette. (First published in the *Deutsche Briefe*, Lucerne, Ligaverlag.)

Simultaneously with this campaign of defamation that of de-confessionalization was continued. Certain decisions given by the President of the Reich Press Court, Ammann, were sufficient authority for muzzling all the daily papers published on behalf of the various Christian creeds, and many of the Church organs—as was already known in 1935—were either more or less strictly censored or were confiscated whenever they printed anything inconvenient, even if it were a pastoral letter, the publication of which was permitted by the terms of the Concordat.

The one year's apprenticeship that has to be served on leaving an elementary school was made use of for de-confessionalizing purposes, inasmuch as Catholic children were sent to Protestant districts and Protestant children to Catholic districts. Previous to publication, an important sentence was struck out of the pastoral letter dealing with this subject. Further, restrictive regulations were applied to the collection of alms for Catholic charities. According to their own appeal to the public, their contribution

to the Winter Relief Fund of 1935 was confined to abstention from collecting on their own behalf and to the recommendation of non-denominational charities. The " narrowing " of the activities and influence of Catholic youth associations has extended to the whole Reich, whereas the Hitler Youth has been given a monopoly, inasmuch as—apart from other preferential treatment—on and after December 31st, 1935, no youth who was sixteen years of age on that date may enter government service unless he has been a member of the Hitler Youth. And yet, in July, 1933, it was expressly stated that membership of a Catholic association would entail no disadvantage whatsoever. When Bishop Graf Galen objected to Rosenberg daring to show himself in Catholic Münster, the latter openly derided him by stating that he had no intention of obliging the Bishop by having him arrested—and Reichsminister Frick, in announcing *his* programme, spoke of the necessity of de-confessionalizing public life and (presumably on the strength of the Concordat) of the duty of Catholics to obey the sterilization law.

All these attacks, however, were not really attacks —as the people were assured time and time again— but merely replies to provocations and intrigues. According to the National Socialist idea, " political Catholicism " was still alive, and, in fact, was raising its head with ever-increasing boldness. The conviction of priests, naturally on the sole charge of having spoken or acted against the State, was useless —one had only to cite the particularly notorious

cases of the parish priest Muhler at Munich in 1933 and of the prelate Leffers at Rostock in 1935. Finally, on July 19th, 1935, Ministerpräsident Göring found himself " compelled " to issue a sharply worded edict on his own account against " political Catholicism ", wherein he drew an arbitrary distinction between the patriotic bishops and the politicizing clergy, against whom, the bishops' efforts being of no avail, the State would have to intervene.

What action was taken by the Church? In two articles published on July 26th and August 4th the *Osservatore Romano* issued official admonitions and exhortations, with particular reference to Frick, and made short work of the nonsensical talk about " political Catholicism ". As these articles were not allowed to be published in the German Press German Catholics remained in ignorance of them apart from hearing them read from the pulpit in one or two dioceses. Similarly it was only by this means that they came to hear of the pastoral letter from Fulda that had been signed by every German bishop on August 19th. This letter condemned the talk about political Catholicism as being frequently directed against the Church herself, firmly upheld the Catholic associations, warned parents against associations that were hostile to the Church, discussed the possibility of religious instruction in schools having to be replaced by instruction given by the children's mothers, and announced that a memorandum had been sent to the Chancellor of the Reich summarizing all the grievances of the Catholics.

This letter, too, was forbidden to be published in the Press. It appeared in Archbishop Gröber's official organ in Freiburg, with "two not unimportant abridgements" (to quote the K.I.P.A.), but this act of "clerical self-censorship" (*Linzer Volksblatt*) was not enough: even this edition was confiscated. Similarly it was only in an abridged form that the pastoral letter which had been signed by every German bishop was able to be published in the official organ of Cardinal Schulte, Archbishop of Cologne.

The relations between the Catholic Church and the National Socialist State are still in their second stage, and there can be no question but that the State has won several successes in its assaults on the Church's position in public life. The Centre and the Bavarian People's Party have disappeared, but "political Catholicism" still serves as an excuse for contravening the Concordat. The Catholic Press has been disposed of, and papers that were formerly Catholic have been compelled for some years now to publish news that is damaging to the Church. Recently the majority of them have not been permitted to show even an outward sign of the creed they represent. The Catholic associations are in a highly precarious condition. The fact that they still exist is due solely to the unobtrusive self-sacrifice of their members, who refuse to be dispirited either by the repeated campaigns of defamation or by oppressive social measures, such as the continual edicts, aimed against Catholic workers' associations, forbidding those belonging to the Labour Front to

be members of any other association. There have been some voluntary disbandments, such as that of the Catholic Teachers' Association in 1933, and the abandonment of denominational character, such as that of the Students' Associations in 1934, but there has been no general surrender. But how much longer will the associations be able to exist? Nothing is left undone that might make life difficult for them —from the refusal to employ apprentices who do not belong to the Hitler Youth to the refusal to grant a workers' club a licence to sell alcoholic liquor. Under the pretext of combating "political Catholicism" anyone may insult priests, religious and bishops to his heart's content. Nor do these attacks stop short at the Pope himself and Catholic dogma, as the Berlin Church Journal was recently compelled to place on record. Communication between bishops and their flocks is greatly hindered witness the fate of the pastoral letters of 1934 and 1935.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the situation evokes the memory of St. Ambrose, the bishop who with undaunted courage faced the mighty ones of his day as the protector of justice and the defender of the Church. He already appears in 1933 in an article on the Concordat written for the *Rhein-Mainische Volkszeitung* by Fr. Nell-Breuning, S.J. Then, subsequent to the events of June 30th, 1934, a work entitled *St. Ambrose and the German Bishops* was published by the Ligaverlag of Lucerne, and was the cause of Catholic youths being summoned before the Reichsgericht (the Supreme Court of

Justice) for having attempted to distribute copies of it, the work itself being banned in Germany. Shortly before his death Bishop Bares acknowledged that he was its author. Finally, Cardinal Pacelli, in his letter to Cardinal Schulte of March 25th, 1935, held up the Milanese prince of the Church as a model to be copied by the present-day episcopacy.

The selection of the powerful and inspiring figure of St. Ambrose as an inspiration during the present emergency is as typically representative of the feeling of the Catholic rank and file in Germany as the legend that is continually being repeated not only in the Catholic parts of Germany, but also abroad—of the bishop who was threatened with arrest, but on appearing in his solemn robes of office so overawed those who were about to lay hands on him that they left him in peace. The people sets its hopes on a power that in the midst of a disintegrated and chaotic world recalls to their minds the imperishable law of God and by its mere presence compels mankind to yield to it. The people knows that the Church, when acting thus, is not acting in her own interests. It knows that for this reason it is not a question of employing force but of representing Christ, the Monarch whose kingdom is not of this world, and is precisely on that account superior to it.

Will the Catholic people prevail in the end? Will the Church's pre-eminence soon be manifest to its contemporaries, even in National Socialist Germany, even in spite of the most deadly

attempts to undermine it? The answer to this is the awakening of the rejuvenated Church, brought about by this very persecution which carefully professes not to be a persecution—a far more effective awakening than was caused by any conflict of the nineteenth century.

THE OUTLOOK

THE struggle for the Church in the Third Reich s a struggle for the soul of the Church. It is not, as the National Socialists continually proclaim it to be, a struggle for political strongholds which are not he Church's business and may be safely entrusted o the laity, nor is it a squabble between pastors and heological professors who with their dogmatism and heir acrimony pay no heed to the questions of the our and the interests of the people, and afford an pportunity to reactionaries and other enemies of e State of carrying on their work of disintegration. Nor is the struggle for the Church a "self-nterested" one, if by self-interest is meant a fight or merely material influence, the repelling of State nterference with the Church's organization, with ssociations of the laity under Church patronage, etc. Certainly the Churches do struggle on this account, ut the struggle is not an end in itself, for none of the positions occupied by the Churches exist for their own sakes but are merely means for the fulfilment of the Churches' supra-temporal mission. The real object of the Reich Concordat is not the guarantee of stipends, of State-controlled theological faculties, of the positions in common law held by ecclesiastical bodies. All these things are only means to the final end, the preaching of the Catholic

doctrine in Germany and the living in conformity with this doctrine. In the case of the Evangelical Church its adherents are not fighting for any particular posts or for the retention of some particular Christian terminology, but for the realization of the true essence of the Christian Church, which precludes compromises (tantamount to betrayal) with those powers which are attempting more or less adroitly—and the more adroitly, so much the more seductively—to set earthly values and regimes in the place of Christ.

Hitherto, however, the supra-ecclesiastical nature of the struggle has not been clearly revealed. That is to say, its true character is frequently obscured by the struggle being carried on in the open by methods that make the Church appear to be but one of many groups, all of which, by reason of their great national and moral importance, offer the most spirited resistance to any encroachment on their domain or attempted lessening of their influence. Karl Barth, in the course of a letter written to his German friends when, deprived of office, he was leaving Germany to take up a professorship at Basel, describes this danger in terms so vivid as to make him the spokesman of millions of adherents to either religion. The extract that follows is taken from the issue dated November 10th, 1935, of the courageous Christian weekly, *Der Deutsche in Polen* (published at Kattowitz) :

" My opinion of the present regime in Germany, which was unfavourable from the very beginning

. . . has come to such a pass with the lapse of time and the course of events that my continued existence in Germany has become—one might almost say—physically impossible, seeing that the Confessional Church as a whole cannot see eye to eye with me in this connection. Personally, I have no doubt that an untold number of its members are of the same opinion as myself, though they do not express it, and I am fully convinced that sooner or later the Confessional Church as such will be forced by the very tenets of its creed to think as I do—and then to speak and act accordingly. But the Confessional Church as such has not yet reached this stage. It does not think as yet that, when addressing a 'word to the higher powers', it ought to express anything else but an 'urgent request' (backed by the assurance of its political reliability), that it should be allowed to continue its present existence, namely an existence guaranteed by the Government of the Reich. It does not yet think that if the prayer be genuine which it offers for the higher powers instituted by God, this prayer, on the day when it sees lying and injustice made a governing principle, ought to turn into one, provided for by the Psalms, for deliverance from what has become an execrable tyranny. It is not yet moved by the sight of millions of human beings suffering injustice. It has as yet had nothing to say on the subject of public honesty. It still speaks—when it speaks at all—only in its own interest. It still maintains the fiction that the State with which it has to deal, the

State such as actually exists in Germany to-day, is a State founded on right, such as St. Paul had in mind when writing the thirteenth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. And at the present time there is less likelihood than ever of the State undergoing any rapid change. It will always be a painful memory to me that in the last two years I did not advance more boldly along the path that my conscience bade me take. Perhaps, as I am a Swiss, it was not befitting that I should do so. However that may be, I can now no longer agree to keep silent when I ought to speak, and to speak when silence would be the only worthy form of speech."

A possible answer to Barth is that he is even more guilty than his German friends of the failings for which he reproaches them. He goes on keeping silence, continuing to do in public what he privately deplores, and is thus far worse than State Bishop Marahrens with his perpetual *Heil Hitler!*, for Marahrens does not believe that the National Socialist system has turned lying and injustice into governing principles, he still hopes that things are not so bad as they seem, that it is only a question of painful and regrettable incidents that, after all, might easily be brought about by any form of "higher power" that is prone to sin and is fighting sin with every means at its disposal.

But the matter no longer concerns us at this stage, however painful it may be that Barth should maintain silence after writing such a letter, which,

incidentally, bears the ominous date, June 30th . . . a silence which cannot be justified on the plea of consideration for the feelings of his weaker brethren, for his silence only confirms them in their inaction and bewilderment. Perhaps Barth might excuse himself on the plea that his theology is so pure that it must avoid any danger of coming into contact with earthly realities. It is an involuntary proof of the impossibility of this theology of his which denies everything that is concrete and earthly and consequently in actual fact capitulates to the powers that be. (We must say this about it, however much we are indebted to it, and though we recognize its mission of reawakening interest in theological questions which the world was tending to forget.) Its impossibility is demonstrated when Barth suddenly tries to use it as a basis for adjudging earthly right and wrong, and political systems and procedure, for he no longer contents himself, at any rate in private, with reminding the State of its transitoriness, as he did in 1933, or with saying "*Pecca fortiter!*" as he did (also in 1933) to a pastor stationed abroad who asked him what was the purpose of his work for Germanism (*Theologische Existenz* 5). A possible explanation of this letter of June 30th, 1935, which now seems so curiously inconsistent in view of the silence that has followed it, is that it represents a breaking away of an *anima naturaliter christiana* from the fallacious conclusion of a "pure theology" which is intelligible only from an historical viewpoint and results in isolating the Christian faith in an hermetically sealed compartment.

An inexplicable feature of this struggle between the Church and State—which Karl Barth's letter brings before our mind most graphically—is the silence which the Church has hitherto maintained in the face of a regime which under a cloak of Christianity is nothing but a system of injustice, terrorism, and lies. The effect of this silence is to bewilder Christians and to disillusion most bitterly non-Christians, who might have otherwise been converted but actually are losing all confidence in the Church as a result of her failing to show her disapproval of flagrant injustice. Needless to say, in this case silence does not mean consent, but it gives the impression that if only formulas and methods could be found that guaranteed the Church her outward existence and a certain moral influence on individuals (nothing, of course, that would seriously conflict with the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*) the battle would be over. Admittedly the bishops and the Vatican have continually warned the world of the dangers and false doctrines that threaten it at the present time, but up to now no document has been published that goes further than the pastoral letter from Fulda of 1934, and even in that a distinction is still drawn between the Government itself and what are described as "influential quarters". Then again, Hitler's Government has been warned of the consequences of another *Kulturkampf*, through such channels as the *Osservatore Romano* (*vide* the articles that appeared in July and August, 1935), and the Catholics have been defended, and protests have been made against violations of

the Concordat, in confidential notes. Also, all the errors of National Socialism have been refuted ; in fact, when their underlying theory is examined it is found to have been culled from " the dustbin of the nineteenth century ", to quote a phrase used by Barth with reference to the " German Christians ". But this silence in the face of actual injustice, this apparent reluctance to call a spade a spade, this withholding of the customary authoritative support from the faithful, on the assumption—by no means an erroneous one—that they understand quite well who is referred to in admonitions issued in general terms, no names being mentioned—all this gives rise to the impression that the Church authorities are still nursing hopes of coming to an agreement or compounding with this National Socialist world. National Socialism has already disposed of many of the enemies that threatened the Church in the nineteenth century—Liberalism, Freemasonry, the unhealthy side of Judaism, and, above all, Bolshevistic atheism. Who knows ? Black as the prospect is, perhaps the time will come one day when National Socialism will improve, when its evil elements will lose their strength. Perhaps it will be converted with the aid of the Reichswehr, whose power is now in the ascendant. . . . Until then there is nothing for it but to wait patiently and keep one's temper, without, of course, yielding any of one's principles.

But meanwhile this silence is exploited by the National Socialists to make light of the dispute in the Protestant Church as though it were merely a squabble between pastors—for the Confessional

Church, too, is silent, as we know from Karl Barth—and to create the impression that the Catholic Church is cowed by real force—she says nothing when a strong State takes action ; she remembers her mission of being the interpreter of the natural law only when the State is weak and cannot defend itself, and is consequently forced to pay heed to her moral warnings.

It is not for us to anticipate the verdict of history with regard to this silence. We know indeed that Christ has promised that " the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church ", but we know also that this does not absolve her of the obligation of proclaiming this promise and the state of real distress that exists in *this* particular country at *this* particular time. And, although the responsibility of deciding when and how this is to come about may rest solely with the Church authorities, nevertheless the Catholic layman is permitted—nay, he is bound by his duty to his neighbour—in this case those who must keep silent—to remind those Church authorities of his distress, which is really that of the whole world.

At the present time, perhaps, this appeal will have to be confined to a clear exposition of the facts. In the nineteenth century the Church was either openly attacked or was admired, by some people with a sympathetic smile, by others on account of her past history, and was recognized as the representative of traditional morality (her dogmas being barred, of course). In the twentieth century the root of the danger that threatens Christianity lies

in the fact that its enemies no longer appear in their true colours, unlike the Russian form of Bolshevism, which at any rate in this respect is the true heir of the nineteenth century.[1] The anti-christianism of our time has so little regard for Christ Himself, and despises the Church so utterly, that it even borrows her own forms and formulas wherewith the more effectively to ruin her. (In this respect, too, it is the very image of Soloviev's Antichrist, with his flattery of every Christian denomination.) And Germany, where National Socialism is attempting logically to materialize this "spirit"—in a manner totally different from that in which it is done by other systems—to its uttermost consequences, both in respect of its final object, its tortuous methods, and its double-dealing, is *the* great battlefield of the world.

We have said openly what the Church's silence means to this God-mediatizing and therefore godless actuality. To many minds this actuality seems to be Christian, or at least compatible with Christianity: some of its characteristics are only exaggerations of Christian precepts, such as the respect that is due to nationality and the necessity of moral and religious unity, or it might be that they are blended with false conceptions, such as racial worship. When the Churches fail to denounce this actuality directly and say nothing about the injustice it perpetrates under the guise of Christianity, it acquires the reputation of being nothing more than a "political regime" that may be argued

[1] *Cf.* my book, *The Future of Bolshevism* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1936).

about like any other. After all, it may be said, the National Socialist system is a regime within the bounds of Christianity, not like the Russian form of Bolshevism, which it most meritoriously detests and fights.

It is a consoling thought, however, that this silence may have a Providential purpose : it may be paving the way for, and making possible, a settled attitude towards the world on the part of the Church and the Christian faith. A Christendom must first exist that no longer regards the State as its natural support, that realizes that it is living in a heathen, albeit post-Christian, world, a world that hates the Church as a reproachful relic of the past which it thought it had left behind for good and all. Christendom must realize that once again it is the Church's and its own duty to shoulder responsibility for the faithful, part of which responsibility it was able in former days to hand over with confidence to " the higher powers ", or which—and this was the object of the Concordat—it could undertake itself if left in peace or, better still, if actually encouraged by the higher powers. As the strict Thomist Jacques Maritain informed us in his lectures at Santander, there will no longer be a Christian world but only Christian cells, whose duty will be to proclaim the kingdom of Christ much in the same way as it was represented in the Middle Ages by the Holy Roman Empire.

The genuine Christian will welcome the fight that has been forced upon him by National Socialism, because he has no selfish interest in the preservation

of the Church's organization and machinery and because, on account of the National Socialist aim of deifying the German race, thereby turning the Kingdom of God into a mere symbol that may be respected or ignored at will, it is impossible to come to an "understanding" with it as with a regime that is based on compromises and the co-existence of various groups, each with its own "world theory". The exclusiveness of National Socialist claims is shaking the German Catholics' faith in external activity and organization, for what happened to their influence in 1933 and 1935? On the other hand, it has given life to a young Church, a Church of "unknown believers" who are well aware that Concordats and other safeguards, however necessary, are limited in effect and that a Catholicism with a traditional sociology is of little use in the world as it is to-day. To them, diplomacy and Concordats are merely temporary defences, though they are not ungrateful to their constructors for having provided them with the means of averting catastrophes which might have hindered the growth of the new Christendom. And the Protestants, too, have been reminded of the seriousness of their faith—not merely of the need of defending it dialectically—of the fact that their ecclesiasticism was little more than a formulation of national sentiment, but, on the other hand, that it does not suffice to confess one's faith as an individual, that a Church is also necessary as the visible community of Christ, who is still living amongst us at the present day. Both creeds earnestly believe that the one thing that really matters is belief in Christ

and that the Church is not in essence a power of this world.

Wherever men and women confess to Christ in this way and stand by one another, this "new Christianity" will be realized; and no real believer can doubt that it will finally merge into the one Church, even if for some time yet it may have to find its way thither in separate groups distinguished by their traditional creeds. Similarly it is only thus that the German nation can be permanently united. True peace will reign over "the world's battlefield" only with the help of Christ; no true peace will be brought about by ignoring or even assaulting Him. Only with Christ's co-operation will Germany be able to fulfil its function in the world, which is to be of service to it, not to dominate it.

We see, then, that the tasks that lie before the Catholic and the Confessional Churches in the Third Reich are essentially the same, however great the dogmatic and historic differences that have brought them to their present situations. Both must make the same venture of faith, even though their creeds be different. If faith is to be more than a personal, private affair it must be proclaimed to the world at large as the unconditional and uncompromising belief in Christ, just as it is proclaimed at every divine service within the four walls of a church. Wherefore, with all due caution we agree to Karl Barth's prophetic utterance concerning the inter-relations between the Christian creeds. In view of the continual reports of how all in Germany who believe in Christ are supporting one another in the

most amazing fashion, we may quote what was said at the Reich Synod at Barmen in conjunction with the theological resolution that was passed—words that might well serve as a reply to Cardinal Faulhaber's appeal to believing Protestants on New Year's Eve, 1933: "What this may mean to the mutual relations of the Churches, we leave in the hands of God."

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF EVENTS

1648. The Treaty of Westphalia ends the Thirty Years' War of religion.
1666. Paul Gerhardt's dismissal from office.
1738. The "Soldier King's" (Frederick William I) abolition of early Lutheran ceremonies.
1817. The Prussian Union. Wessenberg, advocate of a National Church, rejected a an episcopal candidate by Rome.
1834. Compulsory unification at Hönigern.
1837. Ecclesiastical conflicts at Cologne.
1846. Beginning of "German Catholicism".
1871. Beginning of Old Catholicism. Founding of the Centre Party.
1873. The *Kulturkampf* at its height (the passing of the "May Laws"). Hessian insubordination.
1898. Muth begins his propaganda on behalf of the "Reunion of Church and Culture".
1917. Repeal of the Laws against the Jesuits. Hertling Chancellor of the Reich.
1922. German Evangelical Church League.
1924. Concordat with Bavaria.
1929. Ecclesiastical treaty with Prussia.
1930. Beginning of episcopal action against the N.S.D.A.P.
1931. First National Socialist success in the church elections (in Nassau). Treaty between the Prussian State and the Evangelical Churches (political clauses).
1932. Beginning of the "German Christian" Faith Movement.

1933.	CATHOLICISM.	PROTESTANTISM.
Jan. 30.	Hitler becomes Chancellor of the Reich, Papen Vice-Chancellor. Government's proclamation friendly to Christianity.	
Feb. 17.	Catholic associations' election appeal against the Government.	

1933.	CATHOLICISM.	PROTESTANTISM.
Feb. 25.	German bishops announce their support of the Centre Party.	
Mar. 21.	Hitler gives his reasons for not attending divine service.	Dibelius delivers inaugural sermon at the opening of the Reichstag in the Garrison Church at Potsdam.
Mar. 23.	Government announcement favourable to the Church; Enabling Act passed with the aid of the Centre Party's votes.	
Mar. 28.	Provisional withdrawal of episcopal prohibitions and warnings with reference to the N.S.D.A.P.	
[M]ay 5.	Pastoral letter from Freising in favour of a State based on right as opposed to might.	
April 3–5.		First national congress of the "German Christians".
April 25.		Müller appointed Hitler's plenipotentiary.
May 16–20.		Lokkum draft of Church constitution.
May 16.		"New main lines of policy" adopted by "German Christians".
May 27.		Bodelschwingh elected Reichsbischof.
June 3.	Pastoral letter from Fulda, supporting the Catholic Press, associations, etc.	
June 11.	Workers' meeting at Munich broken up.	
June 24.		Jäger appointed State Commissioner for Prussian Churches.
June 30.		Hindenburg's letter on the situation in the Church.
July 1.	Catholic association headquarters occupied.	
July 5.	Voluntary dissolution of Centre Party.	
July 8.	Initialling of the Reich Concordat. Catholic association headquarters evacuated.	
July 11.	Bishop Berning, Privy Councillor.	
July 11.		Reich Church Constitution.

1933.	CATHOLICISM.	PROTESTANTISM.
		July 14. Jäger's commissionership comes to an end.
July 20.	Signing of the Reich Concordat.	
		July 23. Evangelical Church elections.
July 25.	Promulgation of Sterilization Law (passed on the 14th).	
July 28.	"Inspired" articles in the Press against the *Osservatore Romano's* interpretation of the Concordat.	
Sept. 10.	Ratification of the Concordat.	Sept. 5. Prussian General Synod (Aryan paragraph).
		Sept. 27. National Synod (Müller Reichsbischof). Protest of Pastors' Emergency League.
Oct. 9.	Archbishop Gröber "wholeheartedly" in favour of the new Reich.	
Nov. 8.	Bavarian bishops' election address forbidden to be published.	Nov. 13. "German Christian" scandal at the Sportpalast.
		Dec. 19. Müller delivers Protestant youth into hands of Schirach.
		Dec. 20. Emergency League demands Müller's resignation.
		Dec. 21. Hossenfelder resigns.
1934.		
Jan. 24.	Hitler appoints Rosenberg his plenipotentiary for *Weltanschauung*.	
		Jan. 3–4. First free synod at Barmen.
		Jan. 27. After audience with Hitler, Church Leaders support Reichsbischof Müller.

1934.	CATHOLICISM.	PROTESTANTISM.
Feb. 9.	Rosenberg's *Mythus* put on the Index.	
April 1.	Pope's Easter Message to German Catholic Youth.	
		April 12. Jäger appointed Müller's "legal administrator".
		May 29–31. Reich Synod of the Confessional community at Barmen.
June 5–7.	Conference at Fulda; pastoral letter not read in public.	
June 26.	Hitler promises bishops to end neo-pagan propaganda.	
June 30.	Episcopal representatives agree with State and Party on interpretation of Concordat.	
July 29.	Demonstration of Catholic Youth in the Saar: Bishop Bornewasser speaks against *status quo* newspaper.	
Aug. 19.	People's vote in favour of Hitler; report, afterwards contradicted, that Privy Councillor Bishop Berning advised electors to vote for Hitler.	
		Aug. 9. Second "National Synod" "legalizes" incorporation of *Sonderkirchen* (State Churches of Hanover, Württemberg, and Bavaria).
		Aug. 24–30. Œcumenical Congress at Fanö. Koch elected President of Confessional Synod.
		Sept. 15–17. Attempt to incorporate Bavarian State Church.
		Sept. 23. Müller installed as Reichsbischof.
October.	Clerical *Studien zum Mythus*.	Oct. 20. Second Reich Synod of Confessional Church, at Dahlem.
		Oct. 31. Announcement of Jäger's resignation of all offices.

1934.	CATHOLICISM.	PROTESTANTISM.
		Nov. 22. Appointment of "provisional" directorate of German Evangelical Church (Confessional Church).
		Nov. 27. Announcement of Barth's suspension for refusal to take oath unconditionally.
Dec. 26.	The bishops in ecclesiastical province of Cologne order prayers to be said for the Saar.	
1935.		
Feb. 10.	Faulhaber's sermon at Munich on the school question.	
		Mar. 5. Prussian Confessional Synod at Dahlem opposes the State's totalitarian claims.
Mar. 25.	Pacelli's letter to Card. Schulte.	
		Mar. 28. Frick announces further State interference; first pastors sent to concentration camp.
April.	Ammann's edict against denominational Press.	
May.	First currency prosecutions of clerics.	
		June 4–6. Third Reich Synod of Confessional Church, at Augsburg.
		June 23. Announcement of Barth's dismissal from office, despite legal verdict.
		June 26. Reich Law concerning Evangelical Church disputes.

1935.	CATHOLICISM.	PROTESTANTISM.
July 7.	Frick advocates "de-confessionalization of the whole of public life".	
July 19.	Göring's edict against "political Catholicism".	July 16. Kerrl appointed Reich Minister for Church Affairs.
July 26. and Aug. 4.	*Osservatore Romano* protests officially against "German *Kulturkampf*".	
Aug. 19.	Pastoral letter from Fulda.	
		Sept. 23–26. Prussian Confessional Synod at Steglitz opposes Kerrl.
		Sept. 24. Enabling Act for the benefit of Kerrl.
		Oct. 14. Church Boards set up for the Reich and Prussia.